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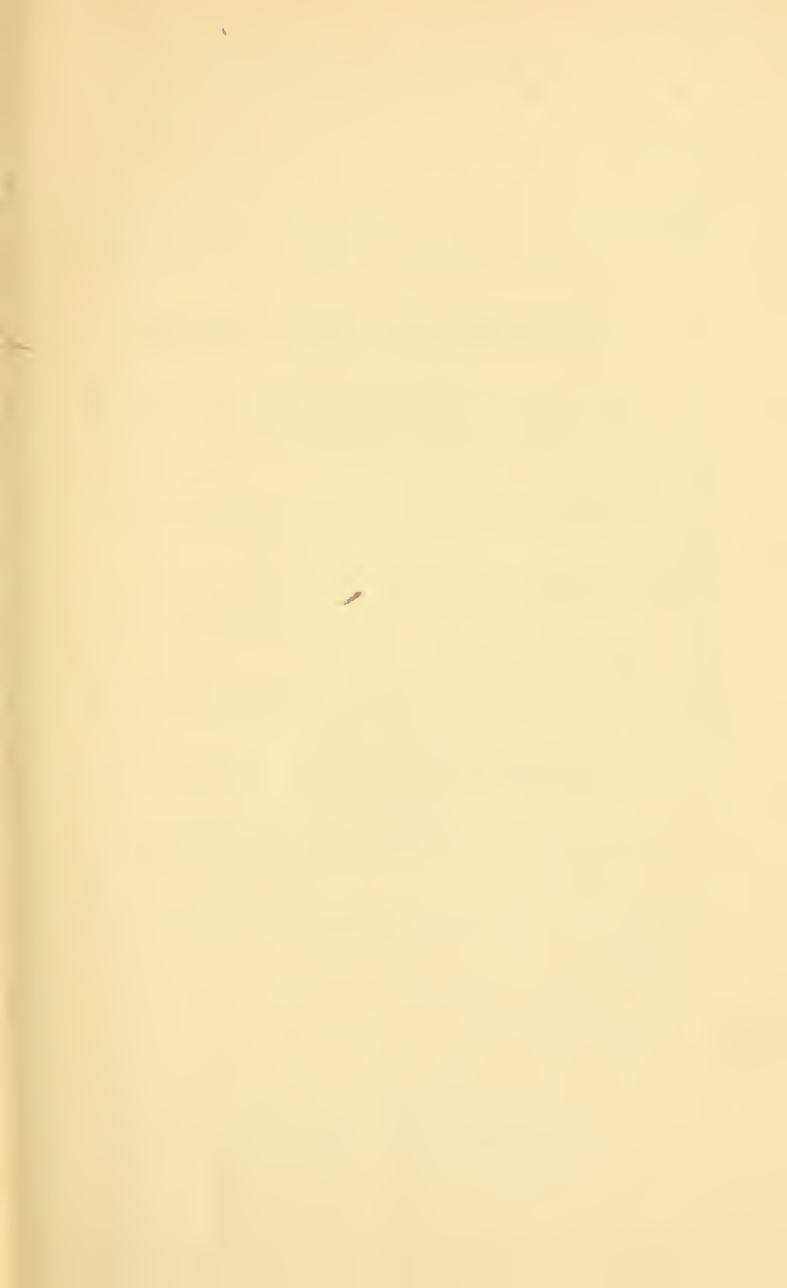
THE RELIGION OF JUDAH

JOHN BAYNE ASCHAM



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The Religion of Judah

BY
JOHN BAYNE ASCHAM



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CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF JUDAH FROM REHOBOAM TO AHAZ

UNITED Israel came to its fullness of national spirit and achievement in the reign of Solomon, during the middle of the tenth century B. C. The death of Solomon precipitated the revolt of the northern portion of the state. Israel, as the northern kingdom is known, pursued a tragic career until the nation perished in the destruction of Samaria in 722 B. C. The southern part of Solomon's kingdom, the inhabitants of the territory lying almost wholly south of Jerusalem, remained loyal to his son. For almost two centuries after the disruption of the kingdom that had been established by Saul, David, and Solomon, the southern state, known as Judah, moved on uneventfully until it too came into collision with Assyria. During this period religious conditions for the most part were the same in Judah as in Israel.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY

Two Centuries of Kings: 937-735 B. C.—(a) *Rehoboam, 937-917.*—In addition to the war with Israel (1 Kings 14. 30) the chief event of this king's reign is narrated in 1 Kings 14. 25-28. For the treasures of the Temple see 7. 51. To despoil the Temple to pay tribute or to purchase an alliance was not an infrequent resort of Judah's kings. See in 2 Chronicles 11. 5-12 the list of cities fortified by Rehoboam.

(b) *Abijah, son of Rehoboam, 920-917.*—War continued between him and Jeroboam. No details of his reign are given by the editor of Kings. A typical instance of the historical methods of the chronicler is 2 Chronicles 13.

(c) *Asa, son of Abijah, 917-876.*—Read 1 Kings 15. 16-22. Since Ramah was only a few miles from Jerusalem, the desperate strait of Asa is easily understood. Read

2 Chronicles 16. 7-10 for the prophetic attitude toward Asa's policy. This is the second inroad upon the Temple's treasures. Note the first hint of the efforts of Judah's kings to reform the cultus (1 Kings 15. 12, 13).

(d) *Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, 876-851.*—Jehoshaphat ended the long feud between Judah and Israel by a marriage alliance with the house of Ahab (2 Kings 8. 18). One of the first issues of this alliance was a campaign against Damascus to recover Israelitish territory in Gilead. See 1 Kings 22. 1-37 for the disastrous results. The chronicler's parallel is found in 2 Chronicles 18. 1 to 19. 3. What other acts are ascribed to him in 1 Kings 22. 46-49?

(e) *Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, 851-843.*—Read 2 Kings 8. 16-18 for his marriage and 8. 20-22 for his disastrous campaign against Edom. The passage 2 Chronicles 21. 2-4 is probably a bit of authentic history that the writer of Kings took no pains to record.

(f) *Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, or Joram, 843-842.*—He reigned a little less than a year. There is little to record about him. He went to Samaria to visit Jehoram, his brother-in-law, the king of Israel, who was ill (2 Kings 8. 29), and, being there at the time of Jehu's revolution, was slain (9. 27, 28).

(g) *Athaliah, daughter of Ahab of Israel and mother of Ahaziah, 842-836.*—Read 2 Kings 11. 1-3 for Athaliah's seizure of the throne. Athaliah had carried into Jerusalem the Tyrian Baalism which her mother Jezebel had imported into Israel (11. 18). What measures did she take to secure herself on the throne? Jehu had already rooted out the foreign Baalism in Israel. How is Athaliah's prolonged success accounted for? Read 2 Kings 11. 4-20 for the revolt under Jehoiada and the enthronement of Joash. 2 Chronicles 22. 11 states that Jehoiada was the priest of the Temple and the husband of Jehoshabeath, the aunt of Joash, whose life she saved.

(h) *Joash, or Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, 836-796.*—Read 2 Kings 12. 4-16 for the king's repair of the Temple. Up to this time the expense of the upkeep of the Temple was

borne by the king. Now the expense is to be borne by the people. At first Joash decreed that two sources of priestly revenue should be expended by the priests for repairs—namely: Temple dues, or taxes, imposed by the priests for this purpose, and free-will offerings. For several years the priests collected this money but failed to expend it as directed. Then the chest was introduced, and the expenditure of the money placed in the hands of the royal secretary and the chief priest. The second plan worked successfully and continued in force probably until the destruction of the Temple. Read 2 Kings 12. 17, 18 for the Syrian aggression and the tribute of Joash. This is the third recorded despoliation of the Temple to pay tribute or to bribe an ally. It is stated in 2 Chronicles 24. 17-22 that the chief priest, Zechariah, was stoned by royal order, and that the king's assassination was in revenge for the priest's death.

(i) *Amaziah, son of Joash, 796-782.*—Read 2 Kings 14. 1-7. After an introduction in the usual Deuteronomic style note the two incidents taken from the older historical records—namely, the execution of the murderers of Joash and Amaziah's victory over the Edomites. The first of these is noteworthy. Observe the statement "the children of the murderers he put not to death." What was the older practice? See Joshua 7. 24; 2 Kings 9. 26. This is a distinct advance in jurisprudence. Later the practice of limiting guilt to the actual transgressor was embodied in the Deuteronomic Code (see Deuteronomy 24. 16). Emboldened by his success over Edom, Amaziah dared Israel to battle. The challenge and the disastrous results are told in 2 Kings 14. 8-14. Again the Temple was despoiled. Undoubtedly Amaziah's folly with regard to Israel occasioned the insurrection that ended in his death (14. 19, 20).

(j) *Azariah (Uzziah), son of Amaziah, 782-740.*—His son Jotham was regent from 751 until his father's death, when he assumed the throne. The editor of Kings gives only two events of Uzziah's long reign: 2 Kings 14. 22; 15. 5. The longer account in 2 Chronicles 26. 6-15 throws additional light upon the military activities and commer-

cial prosperity of Judah under the rule of Uzziah. It is quite probable that Isaiah 2. 6-21, with its suggestions of trade and wealth, describes conditions in the closing years of Uzziah's reign. Putting all these references together, what may be inferred concerning the political and social conditions in Judah in the days of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah?

(*k*) *Jotham, son of Azariah, regent 751-740; king 740-735.*—The occasion for the regency is explained in 2 Kings 15. 5. A rare prophetic summary of his reign, 15. 32-38, states that "he built the upper gate of the house of Jehovah." As the Temple came more and more to be the sanctuary of Judah, the need of the new approaches became pressing. According to 2 Kings 15. 37 the Syrian invasion was threatening at the time of his death. A few other details are added in 2 Chronicles 27. 3-6.

Summary of Political History.—The two centuries of Judah's history from the death of Solomon to the Assyrian period were less eventful than Israel's stormy career. For the first one hundred years there was constant friction between the two kingdoms. This open antagonism was ended by the marriage alliance arranged by Jehoshaphat and Ahab. During the second century Israel's position between Judah and Damascus imposed upon her the brunt of Syria's aggressions. Protected by the northern kingdom's successes and misfortunes, Judah was free to acquire that prosperity and sense of security which characterized the southern state under Uzziah and Ahaz. Judah differs from Israel in its loyalty to the Davidic dynasty. With the exception of the half dozen years of Athaliah's usurpation the throne descended regularly from father to son during nearly the whole of Judah's history. Undoubtedly this loyalty to David's house was augmented by the attraction of the Temple; and the stability of the throne tended to transform gradually the royal sanctuary into the nation's one legitimate place of worship.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Religious Influence of Solomon.—The reigns of

David and Solomon established in the thought of the Hebrew people Jehovah as the national Deity. In his name successful wars of conquest had been waged. All the chief sanctuaries were his. In remote districts some local Canaanitish Baal might still be honored. But in general Jehovah reigned supreme in the religious thought and practice of the Hebrew people. Other nations had their deities, and the reality of these gods was conceded by the prevalent thought of Israel in this period. The primitive worship of Jehovah, the worship of the wilderness, is largely a matter of conjecture. It involved animal sacrifice, perhaps at stated periods but certainly at times of confusion and crisis. The sacred places, where sacrifices might be offered, were few and unadorned. This primitive worship was very similar to the religious beliefs and practices of the Bedouin of to-day.

Upon entrance into Canaan this primitive worship was greatly modified by the religious life of the Canaanites. The religion of the nomad gave place to the religion of the settled agriculturist. The common worship became largely a borrowing from the Canaanites. The three great annual festivals (Exodus 23. 14-17) entered into the worship of Jehovah from the customs of the Canaanites. The sanctuaries of the Hebrews in Palestine had been sacred places long before their settlement in the land. The mazzebah, or stone column, and the asherah, or wooden pillar—essentials at a Canaanitish altar—became familiar elements in the sacrificial feasts of the Hebrews.

In addition to the unchallenged, unspiritual forms of worship Solomon introduced the altars and the priests of foreign deities. As a result of his treaties with surrounding nations women of the royal families of these nations were admitted to his harem. With these wives, in the manner of our modern ambassadorial privileges, came the religious rites of their respective peoples. Upon the Mount of Olives, Solomon set up a sanctuary of Astarte, the widely worshiped Semitic goddess of fertility and love; Milcom, the national god of the Ammonites; and Chemosh, the chief Moabite deity (1 Kings 11. 6-8). The editor

of the book of Kings does not give the names of other foreign deities worshiped at Jerusalem but states (11. 8) that Solomon's many marriages were the occasion of many diverse forms of worship.

These women of foreign birth, representing trade relations with their homeland, naturally would not be the only worshipers at these shrines on the Mount of Olives. Nor would these sanctuaries, at which women of royal blood worshiped, be inconspicuous and meanly adorned. The worship conducted at these altars not only would tend to make the Hebrew tolerant of foreign rites but also would attract the natives of Jerusalem to participate in the foreign rites. The worship of Astarte in particular would be demoralizing. Some of these sanctuaries were in existence until the reforms inaugurated by Josiah swept them away. That they should have continued for a period of more than three hundred years indicates that Hebrews were drawn into the worship carried on at these shrines, and that Judah was not as alert as Israel to invasions of the rights of Jehovah.

Tyrian Baalism.—The policy inaugurated by Solomon was followed by other princes. Jehoram married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, sovereigns of Israel. As her mother had done in Samaria, she introduced Tyrian Baalism into Jerusalem. A temple was erected for the worship of the Phœnician national deity, probably on the Mount of Olives; a priest was installed; and numerous altars and images were erected (2 Kings 11. 18). This worship continued uninterruptedly for several years. In Jerusalem this worship supplanted for the court, at least during the six years of Athaliah's reign, the worship of Jehovah as the official religion of the state. That Athaliah, a princess of Israel, should bring Tyrian Baalism into Jerusalem as the official religion of Israel—her marriage with the king of Judah would warrant her in introducing only the religion of her native state—indicates both the resoluteness of her Phœnician spirit bequeathed to her by her mother, Jezebel, and also the tolerance of foreign religions Solomon's example had introduced into Judah.

Efforts at Reform.—There are two accounts of reform during this period which should be noted. Read 1 Kings 15. 12, 13. The sodomites, or sanctuary prostitutes, were no doubt attached to the shrine built by Solomon to Astarte. The abominable image made by the queen mother was probably a phallic emblem. The zeal of Asa indicates a beginning of moral revolt against the Canaanitish-Jehovah worship which was to eventuate later in an ethical upheaval of the ancient cultus. That Asa did not wholly succeed is stated by 1 Kings 22. 46, and Jehoshaphat, who stood for Tyrian Baalism, has something to his credit.

The Temple Built by Solomon.—The political history offers glimpses of the growing importance of the Temple. Built by Solomon as a royal sanctuary, in the course of time it tended toward a sanctuary for the people. The reference 2 Kings 11. 14 indicates that by the time of Athaliah the Temple had become much more than the king's private chapel. The repairs to the Temple were paid for by popular tax and the free-will offerings of the people. The splendor of the Temple overshadowed the ancient shrines of Judah and prepared the people for the Deuteronomic reform in which worship was centralized at Jerusalem.

Priest and Prophet.—During these two centuries there is a marked difference in the character of the religious leadership of Israel and Judah. In Israel's records there appear the schools of the prophets, who in many instances influenced the political history of the kingdom. Shemaiah, Micaiah, Elijah, and Elisha are notable persons in their state. Kings were compelled to reckon with them; the people turned to them in their extremity. The situation in Judah during the same period is quite contrary. In Jerusalem the priest is the leading religious person of the state. He is the custodian and the jealous enthusiast for the dignity of Jehovah. He feels the affront and the danger of Tyrian Baalism and he organizes the revolution that sweeps Athaliah from the throne and her foreign worship from Jerusalem. This difference of religious

leadership corresponds with a difference in the political situation of the two kingdoms. A large factor in the revolt of the northern tribes had been the antagonism of the democratic Hebrews to the autocratic economic methods of Solomon. The prophets arose out of the common life. They voiced the democracy of the people. Consequently, their prominence and influence were assured by the establishment of the northern kingdom. The prophets were also, from the days of Saul, jealous enthusiasts for Jehovah. Consequently, Ahab's alliance with Phœnicia quickened the prophetic activity in Israel. The political isolation of Judah partly accounts for the late appearance of prophetic activity in Jerusalem. Then, too, the Temple was the outstanding religious institution in Judah. It was the royal sanctuary. Its priest was an important personage. The worship was conducted in elaborate manner. The Temple priests naturally became the guardians of the national worship. They united within themselves the spirit of Israel's prophets and the routine of Israel's priests at the royal sanctuaries. It was not until Judah was compelled to face the great empires of the Nile and Euphrates that great prophets arose in Jerusalem.

OBSERVATIONS

The Choice of Historical Material.—Judah's annals for two centuries are brief. As long as history is a record of wars, the narratives of a peaceful people must be concise. These two hundred years were not a brilliant period of Hebrew life; they were a period of spiritual inertia. The richness of a civilization is measured by the expansion of its spiritual vision. Yet during these centuries there was some trailing toward the dawn of ethical religion. The earliest Hebrew laws were codified by Judah's priests within this period. The state's faithfulness to David's dynasty manifests a sense of moral order. Amos, who began the great prophetic experience of religion, was a citizen of Judah. If the historians of Judah had been trained to observe and appreciate the common facts of daily life, they might have wonderfully illumined for us

the ethical growth of Hebrew life, for Amos and Isaiah did not spring up in Judah with no relatedness to moral ideas. There must have arisen in many minds doubts and questionings concerning the ritual of worship. History is not a record of the growth alone. True history investigates and relates the life of the people. It is imperative that all who seek to record the life of our times must see and understand the life of the humble as well as the achievements of the great.

Religion and the State.—Note the concern of the Hebrew states for religion. State religion is usually unspiritual religion. State religion has commonly been autocratic and intolerant. To preserve freedom of conscience there has seemed an increasing necessity in modern centuries to divorce church and state. This separation has tended to create the impression that the state need not concern itself with religion. It is said that it is not a matter of public concern what attitude toward religion is assumed by state officials. It is forgotten that the state is a social institution, that it is a community of human beings. It is disastrous for the individual and the community to consider that any function of mankind may be carried through with the neglect of religion. It is an irreparable social loss for the state to maintain an educational system that makes no provision for formal religious discipline. Is it not possible for the state in some manner to concern itself with religion, that the citizens may be constantly assured that public and individual welfare is grounded in loyalty to the will of God?

THEMES FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why did the Temple at Jerusalem have so little significance for the prophets of Israel?
2. Where did Elijah in his extremity go to commune with Jehovah? (1 Kings 19. 8.)
3. Why is there no reference to the ark during these two centuries? Where was this ancient sanctity during this period? (1 Kings 6. 19.)
4. How is the priestly leadership of religion in Judah to be explained?

5. What change took place in the use of the Temple? What was the cause of the arrangements?
6. Why was the political life of Judah so uneventful during these two centuries?
7. Why was Judah so tolerant of Tyrian Baalism?
8. What forms of worship were observed during the period under review?
9. To what extent does the quiet political life of Judah suggest a fair amount of social justice within the state?
10. In what ways to-day could the state assume the responsibility of inculcating the religious life among its citizens?

REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL READING

- Old-Testament History*, Smith, pages 184-6, 197, 203-6.
Jerusalem, Smith, Volume II, pages 83-131.
History, Prophecy, and the Monuments, McCurdy, paragraphs 269-78, 295-300.
Biblical Geography and History, Kent, pages 182-4.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

THE previous chapter traced the political history of Judah from the death of Solomon, 937 B. C., to the reign of Ahaz, which began in 735 B. C. This was a period unmarked by unique events. Judah was sheltered from the world by the political sturdiness of the northern kingdom. With the Syro-Ephraimitic War, however, Judah entered into world politics. The early prophecies of Isaiah, considered in this chapter, belong to the reign of Jotham, 740-735 B. C., and indicate the internal conditions of the state that led Ahaz on to his fateful policy of alliance with Assyria.

THE CALL OF ISAIAH

The Realization of a Divine Purpose.—Great religious careers frequently are precipitated by a crisis. In every case they are begotten and sustained by the individual man or woman becoming aware of some purpose of God. It is the recognition that God has something for him to do which enables a man to adventure in his name.

Study Isaiah 6. 1-12. This narrative was composed a few years after the beginning of Isaiah's ministry. His call to the prophetic office was in 740 B. C., and this account of that experience which changed the world for him was circulated among his associates probably in 735. The publication served to inform his disciples concerning the influences that shaped his life, his fundamental convictions, and the inevitable obstacles that beset the messenger of lofty spiritual conceptions in a crass age.

Isaiah's career exhibits two disunited features of earlier prophecy. Like Elijah and Elisha he exercises considerable political influence; and like Amos and Hosea he demands an ethical religion. He is the first of the

world's statesmen whose political horizon is profoundly both ethical and religious. He is the forerunner of Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, and Knox. He is also the first Hebrew thinker to formulate a Messianic hope and to deliver a Messianic message. Later chapters will expand this statement. Isaiah therefore becomes a figure of surpassing interest not only in Jewish life but also in the history of the world.

The Convictions Embodied in His Call.—An analysis of this experience of Isaiah indicates that four distinct but related ideas were coming to harvest in his mind—namely: (1) Jewish life is moving in the wrong direction; it has in it the seeds of social dissolution; it is cursed by ambition, greed, sensuality, and disloyalty to Jehovah. (2) The nation's God is nothing less than a righteous God, who ever seeks righteousness among his people. (3) Jehovah needs messengers—men who will face the careless nation and preach righteousness. (4) Righteousness is better than national existence.

With these ideas running in his mind Isaiah made his way into the Temple at Jerusalem. While he worshiped, the Temple before him faded, and a heavenly one took its place. In glorious and awful surroundings the ideas that were forming in his mind were congealed into convictions. Jehovah, manifesting himself to Isaiah in this striking vision, confirmed his meditations. Henceforth Isaiah became the active messenger of the Holy One to sinful Israel.

At the beginning of his ministry Isaiah evidently expected the destruction of Judah. The prophets preceding Amos taught the inviolability of the Hebrew states. Amos and Hosea, in the interest of ethical religion, preached their destruction or, at least, only faintly imaged a restored people. Isaiah, likewise, in his earliest years saw no spirit of repentance in Judah and believed that Jehovah's judgment would end in desolate cities and a wasted countryside. But later his faith became stronger. He became the first to unite a stern denunciation of the sins of Israel and Judah with the clear expectation that the

Judæan state at least should outlive the storms of chastisement and be transformed into a kingdom in which Jehovah's will, expressed in righteousness, would be fully done.

THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE OF ISAIAH

Conventional Holiness.—In few particulars does the history of religion show more striking instances of development than that found in the change of meaning in the idea of holiness. Previous to the eighth-century prophets the conception of holiness held by the Hebrew people was the idea of sanctity which was common throughout the Semitic world and which resembled that which is still to be found among all primitive peoples. The eighth-century prophets repudiated these primitive ideas but they were not able to eradicate entirely the earlier views which will be found reappearing in the legislation that sprang up to enforce Jewish religion after the Exile.

Examine 1 Samuel 21. 4, 5; 2 Samuel 11. 11; Deuteronomy 12. 26; Isaiah 13. 3. It will be observed that holiness is ascribed to things used in connection with a sanctuary; that soldiers were sacred persons because war was initiated by sacrifice and was conducted under the immediate direction of the Deity; that prophets were holy men of God not because of saintliness of character but because they were in the service of God. In Leviticus 6. 18-23, Isaiah 65. 5, and Ezekiel 44. 19 appear some of the most primitive ideas concerning holiness. Here it appears (1) that a person or thing is holy which is set apart for divine use, (2) that holiness is something that may be passed on to others through contact, and (3) that such holiness rendered its possessors unfit to participate in ordinary life. This holiness, gotten by contagion, needed to be purged away by purificatory rites before its possessors could resume their secular vocations.

Holiness for Isaiah.—Until the eighth-century prophets spoke, holiness, in the thought of mankind, had nothing to do with morality and purity of life. Applied to deity it meant irresistible power and unapproachable

majesty. In its earliest use "the holy God" meant no more than God. But with Amos a new conception of God arises. In the thought of the prophets and their disciples God is to be characterized by moral qualities. Isaiah's vision of the holy Jehovah proclaims that holiness has expanded into righteousness.

The whole mission of Isaiah centers in this new conception of deity. Jehovah's holiness is not ritual but ethical, and the holiness that Jehovah demands is moral living. Jehovah is exalted above men neither by his power nor by his capriciousness. If there is a chasm between him and his creatures, this alienation is caused by the want of morality in Judah. That Jehovah is holy and lives apart from men was not a new conception. The Hebrew ever had been aware of a distinction between sacred and common, but this distinction had not been ethicized. Disease, an issue of blood, contact with the dead, a journey into a foreign land, the eating of tabooed animals, made men and women unclean and unfitted them for drawing near an altar and mingling in the sacred festivals. To the people in Isaiah's day holiness meant that the shrines, the priests, the sacrifices, and the worshipers participating in the religious feasts must be free from those physical conditions which rendered them ritually unclean. This ritual uncleanness made them objectionable to Jehovah, they knew not why, and aroused his wrath. Holiness in Jehovah they understood as majesty, the exalted dignity of a being elevated above the chances and changes of the world.

Isaiah felt that such a Deity could not save Judah in its desperate need. There must be in him some loftier nature than was commonly believed, and there must be some deeper ground of acceptability to him than the old distinction of clean and unclean. This aspiration of Isaiah was the open door for the inspiration of Jehovah. It was revealed to the prophet that the one cleanness that Jehovah desired was in life, and the uncleanness that he abhorred was greed, lust, and injustice. He saw that the essence of deity is not power but the splendid radiance

of ethical life. Jehovah is to be feared not because he is all-powerful but because he is opposed to all that is impure and unjust.

THE EARLIEST PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

It is generally agreed that Isaiah 2. 6-21 is to be placed among the earliest of Isaiah's utterances and illustrates his thought shortly after the death of Uzziah. Judah was then enjoying the peace and prosperity that had been increasing through this king's long reign and that continued through the reign of his son and successor, Jotham, and produced that sense of security so fatal to Ahaz in the days of the Syro-Ephraimitic War. The date 739 B. C. fairly represents the time.

Read carefully this section and make a list of the faults for which Jehovah has renounced the nation. Verse 6 should be translated:

*"He hath renounced his people, the house of Judah,
For they are full of divination from the East
And are full of soothsayers, like the Philistines.
They make compacts with foreigners."*

Observe that Isaiah, like Amos, traces the sins of the people to their greed for wealth. In what way has commerce contributed to defection from Jehovah? Does Isaiah feel that financial prosperity weakens in men the feeling of dependence on God? ¹ What does Isaiah mean by the "haughtiness of men" (2. 17)? Note especially the assurance that "there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts" (2. 12). What does Isaiah understand by this? What judgments does Isaiah pronounce upon Judah?

Examine Isaiah 3. 1 to 4. 1. This section also is among the early oracles of Isaiah. Note the additional disorders that are leading on the destruction of the state. Who are the "stay and staff" of Judah—that is, the leaders and the supporters of the state? Observe especially the religious leaders. These are the judge—that is, the priest who de-

¹ See *The Religion of Israel*, Ascham, page 203.

livers oracles at the sanctuary—the prophet, the diviner, the cunning artificer—that is, the expert magician and the skillful enchanter. It was a capricious universe in which people anciently lived. Men neither understood that nature is guided by law nor believed that God's dealings with them were determined by moral purposes. Therefore, men and women lived in a constant anxiety to discover the will of their deity or deities and to placate their whims. It is a sad world that turns to the soothsayer and diviner. Isaiah knew a different world and he was doing his utmost to lead his countrymen to believe in a Deity whose will was discoverable in moral thinking and action, and whose willingness to bless never withdrew from those who faithfully served him by righteous living.

Isaiah sternly denounces the socially favored leaders who have not hesitated to live by economic oppression of the poor (3. 14, 15). The women of his times by wantonness and luxury contribute to the general demoralization of the nation (3. 16, 17). Isaiah's words will recall the scorn of Amos for the "kine" of Samaria (Amos 4. 1), whose sensuousness made for the destruction of the northern kingdom. Observe the doom Isaiah pronounces upon the thoughtless and selfish women of his day (3. 24 to 4. 1).

The beautiful parable of the vineyard, Isaiah 5. 1-24, also dates from the early years of Isaiah's ministry and belongs probably to the last year of Jotham's reign, when the threatened approach of the Syrian and Israelitish forces brought keenly to the prophet the dissoluteness of the state. Note the beauty of the imagery and the swift application in verse 7, when the attention and sympathy of his hearers have been secured. What instances of a fruitless vineyard are cited in verses 7, 8, 11, 12, 18, 23? What penalty is to be meted out to these land-grabbers, drunkards, scorers of the judgments of Jehovah, triflers with moral distinctions, and accepters of bribes? Note that Isaiah (5. 24) sums up the sin of Judah as a rejection of the instruction of Jehovah of hosts. By the law or teaching of Jehovah, Isaiah does not mean a definite

set of laws but such social principles of honorable dealing as had come to be more or less clearly defined through the centuries. These principles had been enunciated by priests at the sanctuaries, by prophets, and by other eminent men who endeavored to make human society more secure. The better knowledge of life that had sprung up in the human conscience Isaiah holds is the teaching of Jehovah.

We close our study of this group of early prophecies with an oracle against Israel. It was impossible for a prophet of the southern kingdom to keep silent about the northern state. Already Amos, a dozen years before, had left his southern home to proclaim his message from Jehovah at Bethel. Read Isaiah 9. 8 to 10. 4. This section is a denunciation of the arrogance and folly of the northern kingdom in failing to profit from the disasters already befallen the state and its blindness to the approaching danger from Assyria. Afflictions already endured have not taught the nation's leaders to set the state in order. The weak and defenseless are openly wronged, tribal feuds curse the land, and a general condition of anarchy prevails. Isaiah 5. 25-30 is the conclusion of this oracle. There is nothing in Hebrew prophecy which surpasses the vivid imagery describing the approach of the avenging Assyrian hordes upon guilty Israel.

THOUGHTS FOR OUR TIMES

Driven by the profound sense of the false security of his times, Isaiah was brooding in the Temple when the vision came. Aspiration ever precedes inspiration. Higher religious conceptions always are first formed within aspiring souls. God never becomes a reality to the man who does not question the universe. Man *climbs* to heaven. He dreams of the eternal city before he finds a ladder reaching from his stony pillow to its golden portals.

It was the Jerusalem Temple, with its failure to command the conscience of his day, which set Isaiah groping for a loftier religious authority. Each new and commanding revelation is never a complete break with the past;

it is always a development of existent ideas and forms. To apprehend this truth fully makes for the progress of the kingdom. About us everywhere are vast sections of life where the principles of Christian brotherhood are not applied. Sometimes it is ignorance, as well as cursed selfishness, which delays the better day. To feel that the greatest advances are never a birth out of nothing but the result of long processes of development will hold us heroically to our tasks and quicken our vision.

Isaiah makes no effort to overturn Judah's political and economic institutions. Whether he was satisfied with them, we do not know. If he could have had his way he would have swept aside the soothsaying, the idolatry, and the religious feasts. He gladly would have had such customs perish. There was in them no basis of reform. But the prophet well understood that in order to obtain a just society it is necessary to change the spirit of living rather than to change an institution.

Consciousness of God is our guard against sin. It is infrequently that we remind ourselves of his presence in our life. To remember that our very being is the product of his continual thought enables us to think constantly of him as the sleepless, loving Father, ever ready to enter into communion with us. To think of yourself, when your thoughts turn upon self, as God's child, servant, and friend; of your home as God's guest house; of your business as God's talent intrusted to you; of your recreations as God's way of keeping you healthy and wholesome; of your fellow beings as brothers and sisters in his family, would eliminate sin in your life. To gaze steadily upon the face of God is the one perfect way to noble character.

You may read Isaiah's vision over and over, but it is not your vision. The most heroic religious achievement of the past avails you nothing unless it leads you to reproduce it in your own life. You cannot rest with other men's visions of God; you must possess your own. When your vision of God comes it may draw from you a cry of woe. Your life will seem so fruitless measured by

your opportunities. When your vision comes, you will cease to apologize for righteousness; you will cease to compromise with doubtful wrong; you will no longer cringe before blustering evils. Get your vision of God, like the disciples at Emmaus, when he breaks your bread, not when he breaks your heart. It is not opportunity but vision that you need. If the vision of God passes you by—the vision that burns up the dross and purifies you for service, that turns the stammering tongue into noble eloquence and your faltering feet toward paths of service—it is because you look for God in the storm, the lightning, and the earthquake rather than in the temple of your daily contact with your fellow men.

The Hebrews believed in contagious holiness. To touch a holy person or object infected one with holiness. But the holiness that was conferred in this manner unfitted one to fulfill the common duties of life. We still believe that holiness is contagious. When one lives worthily, the life of others in immediate association takes on a finer spirit. Genuine Christian living induces others to live nobly. But this holiness does not make more difficult the common day and the customary duty. It is an inspiration, not a destruction of life.

THEMES FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Narrate some of the historical incidents which engaged Isaiah's attention at the threshold of his public ministry.

2. Describe the event which inaugurated Isaiah's prophetic career.

3. What was the popular conception of holiness? What did Isaiah understand by holiness?

4. What social wrongs did Isaiah condemn?

5. What religious practices met his disapproval?

6. What was Isaiah's doctrine of "the day of Jehovah"?

7. What punishments did Isaiah believe would fall upon his countrymen? By what agency would they be inflicted?

8. What did Isaiah conceive to be the cause of the social anarchy which was dooming the state?

9. What salary did Isaiah receive for his preaching?

10. Judging from Amos, Hosea, and from this first study of Isaiah, what do you consider is the characteristic feature of eighth-century Hebrew prophecy?

SUGGESTED READINGS

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Wade, pages xvii-xl.

Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, Knudson, pages 137-53.

The Religion of Israel, Smith, pages 147-54.

Article, "Holiness," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Hastings.

CHAPTER III

ISAIAH AND THE JUDÆAN CRISIS OF 735 B. C.

ISAIAH now assumes the leading rôle in the spiritual life of Judah. In the first years of his ministry, like Amos and Hosea, he has but little influence upon the social and political life of the state; henceforth, throughout his long career, Isaiah appears a political counsel not to be ignored. The present chapter is a study of the conditions in Judah arising through the international relations in which the state became involved and of the messages Isaiah spoke to his countrymen in this eventful crisis.

THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITIC INVASION OF JUDAH

The Coalition Against Assyria.—Ahaz, the son of Jotham, came to the throne of Judah in 735. Immediately he had to face the combined attack of Israel and Syria (Damascus). Read 2 Kings 16. 5-9. From these verses it appears that these two states, having determined to make a stand against the conquering progress of Assyria in the west, apparently had solicited Judah, while Jotham was yet king, to join the confederacy. The refusal of Ahaz to unite in a coalition against the powerful Assyrian led the two allies into an attempt to force Ahaz to join them. Read Isaiah 7. 1, 2 for a description of the consternation into which Judah was thrown by the proposed attack. Ahaz could not be forced into an attack upon Assyria, but Elath (2 Kings 16. 6) was captured by the Syrians.

Ahaz made overtures to Assyria to come to his relief. He sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser and voluntarily, by the payment of tribute, acknowledged Judah to be a dependency of Assyria. Read 2 Kings 16. 7-10. The Temple was despoiled of many treasures to pay this tribute, and Ahaz himself went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser. The appeal of Ahaz to Assyria resulted in an attack by

Assyria upon Syria and Israel. The northern kingdom suffered severely. Many towns were captured, and their inhabitants were deported into Assyria. Read 2 Kings 15. 29, 30 for the story of Israel's humiliation. This was in 734 or 733 B. C. Damascus was captured by Assyria in 732 B. C. These events and their sequence reveal the remarkable character of Isaiah's statesmanship.

Innovations Introduced by Ahaz.—Examine 2 Kings 16. 10-16. The interests of Ahaz were not wholly political. He saw an altar in Damascus whose design so greatly pleased him that orders were given to erect a duplicate in the Temple at Jerusalem. On his return Ahaz consecrated the new altar. "The brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by" (verse 15) indicates that the king customarily performed a certain class of sacrifices. The innovation of Ahaz is not easy to comprehend. W. R. Smith believes that a fireless type of sacrifice was earlier than the offering by burning the sacrificial portions; that in the earlier custom the blood was dashed against the altar. As long as burnt offerings were rare, it was not necessary to have a permanent hearth-altar. He believes that this new altar was a "permanent hearth-altar," and that the innovation was also in the adoption of "the rule that in ordinary cases this new altar should serve for the blood ritual as well as for the fire ritual." Whatever were the precise details of the new arrangement, the historian regarded the change as significant. It is possible that the interest of Ahaz in the ritual indicates that the popular conception of religion demanded greater attention to the ritual as national calamities increased. It certainly means that the great altar of burnt offering found in the succeeding Temple was a foreign importation. It is of much interest also that at this period the king, not the priest, exercised absolute control over the Temple and its worship.

ISAIAH'S PROPHETIC STATESMANSHIP

Isaiah's Message to Ahaz.—Examine Isaiah 7. 3-17. Isaiah opposed the alliance with Assyria and did his

utmost to convince Ahaz that there was no real danger to be feared from Israel and Syria. He believed himself the direct messenger of Jehovah to his king and he spoke with unwavering confidence that Jehovah would protect and rescue Judah from the threatening ills. Observe the method taken by Isaiah to convince Ahaz that he ought to trust Jehovah rather than Assyria. If this purpose of Isaiah is remembered, verses 14-17 offer little difficulty. The Hebrew word translated "virgin" means a young woman old enough to become a mother. Isaiah urges that Israel and Syria can be only a brief menace to Judah: that before a woman—any woman now marrying—can have a child emerging from babyhood, certain things will occur. At the first dawn of discriminating intelligence—that is, within two or three years—the lands of Samaria and Damascus will be overrun by a foreign power.

But this is not all: Judah also will share in the general calamity. This child—that is, any child—within two or three years, on account of the desolations of war, will be limited to the plain fare of curds and honey. Dire days of devastation (verse 17) are falling upon Judah also. It is quite probable that Isaiah was already aware when he met Ahaz or guessed the truth from the king's conversation that an alliance was to be made with Assyria or already had been made. To the prophet such utter reliance upon human aid was a rejection of Jehovah, and the moral failure of the house of Judah to trust its God gave Isaiah vision to foresee the inevitable outcome of calling Assyrian aid.

Read Isaiah 7. 18-25. It is probable that this section was a part of Isaiah's message to Ahaz at the time that he predicted the defeat of the coalition. It certainly belongs to the same period. Observe that Isaiah becomes more specific in his statement of the disasters that await Judah from the false statesmanship of Ahaz. Note that Egypt and Assyria in this internecine conflict will overrun Judah and fill the land with desolation. Note also the examples of poverty and destruction given by Isaiah.

Isaiah's Appeal to the Populace.—Examine Isaiah

8. 1-4. Note Isaiah's method of making a public appeal. Such a strange message, set up in a public place—no doubt in the court of the Temple—gave Isaiah continual opportunity to warn and encourage the people. Notice the parallel, in his own child, of the Immanuel prophecy in 7. 14-17.

Isaiah's Assurance of the Approaching Overthrow of Syria and Israel.—Read Isaiah 17. 1-11. This oracle closely followed those just studied and was intended to relieve the strain of the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion. Assyria is not expressly stated to be the conqueror of the northern states, but no auditor of Isaiah could have misunderstood him. Observe the striking images of desolation in verses 5 and 6; the cause of Israel's destruction, verses 10 and 11; the presence of the cult of Adonis (Tammuz) in Israel, whose worship included the cultivation of gardens or potted plants that quickly blossomed and as promptly withered.

Isaiah's Counsel Is Rejected.—Isaiah's warnings fall unheeded upon court and people alike. Ahaz, as noted above, enters into alliance with Assyria and so forges the bitter bonds of vassalage upon the southern state. This action is intolerably grievous to Isaiah as a patriot and a religionist. Read Isaiah 8. 5-15. Verse 6 may be rendered:

*"Because this people have rejected the waters of Shiloah
that flow softly,
And are dismayed because of Rezin and Remaliah's son."*

"The waters of Shiloah" (the Pool of Siloam, once within the walls of the city) is the prophet's metaphor for the un-failing helpfulness of Jehovah. Because Ahaz rejects Jehovah and trusts Assyria, Jehovah will overwhelm Judah with "the waters of the River"—that is, the Assyrian armies. In verse 8 the image suddenly changes to a bird of prey. Isaiah expects the Assyrian to be victorious over Syria and Israel and to sweep into Judah also. But Judah will not be totally destroyed. Coalition against

Judah and revolts against Assyria alike will be of no avail. Other nations will go down before the conqueror, but Judah, because "God is with us," will survive. What the king and people called conspiracy, and before which they trembled, Isaiah saw to be the hand of Jehovah laid inflictively upon his people. Jehovah of hosts is Judah's Conspirator (so read in verse 13 instead of "him shall ye sanctify"). He is the stumblingblock for the two kingdoms. The sins and the headstrong, worldly policies of the Hebrew states inevitably are hastening their destruction.

Isaiah feels that, since his counsel is rejected by Ahaz, his public usefulness, at least temporarily, is at an end. Read 8. 16-18. The prophet evidently withdraws from public speech and from any attempt to guide the political destiny of his country. Undoubtedly he had made some disciples. He must have kept in touch with these and waited for a more favorable opportunity to resume his public ministry. This decision was hastened by the popular rejection of true prophetic guidance. The people turn, instead, to the grossest superstitions. Examine 8. 19-22. Verses 19 and 20 may be translated:

*"When they say unto you, Inquire of the spirits of the dead,
And the necromancers who chirp and mutter:
Should not a people inquire of their departed?
On behalf of the living should they not consult the dead?"*

To such solicitation of the distracted and frightened people by the champions of superstition Isaiah thunders his answer: "To the instruction and the testimony." Let them go to the prophets of whom Amos has said (3. 7), "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets." Isaiah felt that for those who listened to such proposals from necromancers and spiritualistic mediums the future was dark indeed. Verses 21 and 22 add a final picture of desolation and gloom.

SUMMARY OF ISAIAH'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS IN THIS MIDDLE PERIOD OF HIS MINISTRY

Isaiah's Political Policy.—Isaiah possessed an unwavering political policy. He opposed all entangling alliances with foreign powers. An alliance with Israel and Syria he opposed with the same vigor with which he denounced any affiliation with Egypt and Assyria. The little states lying between Assyria and Egypt lived precariously. Isaiah believed that Judah should ally itself with Jehovah alone. His political policy was essentially religious.

Beginning his ministry, like Amos and Hosea, with an overwhelming sense of Jehovah's holiness, he severely denounced the social sins and religious defection of rulers and people. Like these earlier prophets Isaiah at first held that nothing but the destruction of the state would eliminate the evils that were undermining the social order; but as the rigors of the Assyrian vassalage became more apparent, and the despair of people and court grew deeper, Isaiah reached a turning point in his ministry and began to preach the indestructibility of Jehovah's people. It seemed incredible to him that Jehovah's purpose to mold a people into conformity to his holy will could be accomplished anywhere outside his chosen land. That Jehovah dwells in Mount Zion is a fixed belief of the prophet. In this belief Isaiah sets a limit to the impending judgment. This had not been done by Amos and was uttered vaguely by Hosea. Isaiah asserts that in the coming disaster Jehovah will preserve all that is necessary to make possible the quickening of the nation into a holy people of God. Isaiah does not predict a captivity. Rather is the state to be overwhelmed by the Assyrian invasion, but out of the ruins a new social order is to arise in conformity to Jehovah's righteous will.

This is the central theme of Isaianic prophecy. Jehovah will not suffer his people to be utterly destroyed. Read again 8. 8 and note the language in which this belief is expressed. Study too, in the light of this conception of a faithful remnant, the symbolic name of Isaiah's son

in 7. 3 (marginal reading). This remnant that is to return unto Jehovah is not some happy band of exiles returning from captivity in a foreign land, but earnest citizens of the state, purged by the calamities that have scourged the nation, who seek Jehovah, and whose seeking eventuates in righteousness.

The Prophet's Religious Beliefs.—Like Amos and Hosea, Isaiah preaches a practical monotheism. He asserts that Jehovah will chastise the confederate states that have assailed Judah. For Isaiah the gods of Damascus and Assyria have nothing to do with the destiny of nations. Jehovah rules them according to his will. "He fills the whole earth with his glory" is the Isaianic creed. Isaiah laughs at the idols. God is not merely the one God in the affairs of the world: he is a holy God whose essential nature is righteousness. Since holiness involves devotion to Jehovah, expressed in justice and righteousness, Isaiah saw the futility of the prevailing ritual to bring men into a correct relation with Jehovah.

Consider the religious faith of Isaiah. It never is an easy task to pioneer in religion. Undoubtedly Isaiah was familiar with the utterances of Amos and Hosea, but the positions taken by them were not the beliefs of the masses. Their messages had not lightened the religious task to which Isaiah gave himself. Isaiah swung free from the prevailing conceptions of Jehovah and from the customary worship into a far more spiritual conception of God and of his requirements from man. This is always the work of genius and abounding faith. Not every modern conception surpasses the old, but it takes more faith to move forward into a new realization of the character and purposes of God than to hold fast to the achievements of the fathers.

The prophet Isaiah is characterized by his faith. He believed in a nobler duty than did his contemporaries; he believed in the value of chastisement; he believed in a new social order. For this faith he lived and for it he would have died. He hesitated at no defense of his faith and shrank from no chance to proclaim his great convictions.

THOUGHTS FOR KINGDOM BUILDERS

The Isaiah who declared of Jehovah, "The whole earth is full of his glory," also wrote, "Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion." It is one of the difficult tasks for thought to present adequately the universal regnancy of the heavenly Father and at the same time to be aware of his presence in a unique way in the immediate concerns of the individual life. Yet there is no great religion apart from such faith. We cannot hold a satisfactory sense of God's comradeship with us unless we enthrone him as the master will of the universe. God cannot dwell adequately for human needs in Jerusalem unless he fills also the whole earth. He cannot share his throne and sway the world. God never has abdicated in favor of the devil.

"I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts" (8. 18), said Isaiah to his countrymen. Let any man make himself and his household a manifestation of the purposes of God, and he becomes an intellectual and moral leader in his community. Any religious man should regard himself as a point of contact between God's thought and human society. Each man who prays, "Thy kingdom come," to be sincere must make his own life a highway for the coming King.

Possibly you have come in contact with persons who have resented the implied or spoken judgment of your Christian discipleship. It is well to remember that when purity of life, fine sympathy, and sterling integrity in all engagements are coupled with vigorous faith, there is little honest adverse criticism with regard to the most earnest propaganda of your religious convictions. Ahaz and his court did not yield to Isaiah's evangel but they respected the messenger. Isaiah's life had been purged by a vision of Jehovah's righteousness before he addressed his countrymen. If you have been quickened by an experience of God and hold radiant ideals of the ought-to-be, you are accursed unless you seek to bring others to the dawn that has arisen in your own soul.

BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH ISAIAH

1. What is known concerning the personal life of Isaiah?
2. What political dangers from abroad threatened Judah?
3. What was Isaiah's doctrine concerning foreign political alliances? Why did he object to an alliance with Israel and Syria? Why did he oppose any acknowledgment of the Assyrian?
4. What was the religious basis of his political policy?
5. What effort did he make to dissuade Ahaz from appealing to Assyria for relief from the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion?
6. What were some of the prevailing religious beliefs and usages, and what was Isaiah's attitude toward them?
7. What change did Isaiah make in his beliefs about the destruction of Judah? What were his reasons for this change?
8. In what way did Isaiah's beliefs vary from those of Amos and Hosea?

SELECTED READINGS

Old-Testament History, Smith, pages 225-37.

Article, "Isaiah," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings, Sections II and VI.

Isaiah: His Life and Times, Driver, Chapter IV.

Isaiah in "The Expositor's Bible," G. A. Smith, Book I, Chapter VI.

CHAPTER IV

ISAIAH AND THE ASSYRIAN INVASION

THIRTY years intervene between the subjection of Judah to Assyria by Ahaz in 735 B. C. and the Assyrian invasion of Judah in regard to which the prophecies of Isaiah reach their climax of political statesmanship and of denunciation and hope for Judah. Great political events take place in this period. Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom, after a long siege succumbed to the army of Sargon, king of Assyria, in 721 B. C. The destruction of Israel stirred Judah as no other fact in her history had done. The inept policy of Ahaz became apparent to all, and the soundness of Isaiah's counsel to keep free from Assyria was fully acknowledged.

Succeeding events increased Judah's fear of Assyria. In 720 some of the Philistine cities, supported by Egypt, revolted from Assyria and were severely punished by Sargon. It became continually more apparent that the Assyrian threatened the very existence of all the little states in Syria and Palestine. During the next ten years Sargon was busy in other portions of his empire; and Judah, growing restive under the annual tribute, developed an Egyptian party, whose members lent themselves to hopes and suggestions of an alliance of western states, supported by Egypt, to throw off the sovereignty of the Assyrian. Sargon crushed the movement by the capture of Ashdod in 711 B. C.

Isaiah's messages during these thirty years were directed toward keeping Judah faithful to Assyria, to predictions of Assyria's ultimate overthrow, to denunciations of Judah's sins, and to promises of better days in the little state. The following sermons of Isaiah are exceedingly difficult to place in exact chronological order.

The arrangement here adopted offers as few difficulties as any.

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, came to the throne of Judah in 715 B. C. (some think as early as 720 B. C.). An interesting narrative of the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah is presented in 2 Kings 20. 1-11. At about the same time, perhaps in 714 B. C., came the embassy from Merodach-baladan. Examine 2 Kings 20. 12-19 and Isaiah 39. 1-8. Merodach-baladan, the king of a small state at the head of the Persian Gulf, seized Babylon in 721 B. C. and held the throne against the Assyrians for eleven years. Evidently it was during this period that he sought an alliance with Judah against Assyria. Hezekiah, restless under Assyria, received the embassy, but the opposition of Isaiah and his own best counsels kept him from the peril of the proposed alliance.

Isaiah 28. 7-22 is a stinging reproof of the social life and political outlook of priests and princes. This characterization of the internal conditions of Judah faithfully reports the evils prevailing during a decade and more preceding the invasion of Sennacherib. Drunkenness had become a curse. Even at the religious feasts men became "soused." No longer do the prophets possess a true vision of Jehovah's ways, and the drunken priests fail to pronounce just judgments. These leaders, whom Isaiah seeks to rouse from this disastrous vice, mockingly retort that he prattles like a child (verses 9 and 10), saying the same senseless words over and over. Isaiah replies to their taunt that a people speaking a foreign tongue—for them the jargon they ascribe to the prophet—will deliver Jehovah's judgments upon them. In the latter part of this section Isaiah rebukes the political leaders who think that in political scheming the safety of Jerusalem lies. In justice and righteousness and in the trust of Jehovah lies the opportunity of Judah's escape from the aggressions of powerful neighbors.

Read Isaiah 20. 1-6. As early as 711 B. C., an alliance

with Egypt became the policy of the Palestinian states in order to free themselves from Assyria. But it was not until 708 that Egypt was in position to render any effective aid against Assyria. The revolt of Ashdod in 711 was severely punished by Sargon. In this section Isaiah, in a very expressive manner, sets forth the folly of any attempt to discard the Assyrian yoke and the impossibility of placing any reliance upon Egypt.

Sargon was assassinated in 705 B. C., and his son Sennacherib came to the Assyrian throne. The death of this great military leader was the signal of revolt throughout his empire. Phœnician and Philistine cities, encouraged by Egypt, threw off the foreign yoke; and the Egyptian party in Jerusalem, against the remonstrances of Isaiah, succeeded in winning Hezekiah to join the rebellion.

PROPHECIES AGAINST AN ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT

Examine Isaiah 29. 15-21. At the time that this oracle was uttered, those leaders in Judah who thought to escape from the rigors of the Assyrian by an alliance with Egypt were secretly plotting this transfer of allegiance. Such counsel is sure to fail. It is against the plans of Jehovah. The clay might as well ignore the potter as the people of Judah their God. Let them trust Jehovah, and the "terrible one"—that is, the Assyrian—will be "brought to nought."

Study Isaiah 30. 1-7. The secret leaning toward Egypt has become an open policy. Emissaries with rich presents have been sent by Hezekiah to Egypt. Observe the manner in which Isaiah denounces this embassy. It is an added sin to Judah's already overdrawn account in the patience of Jehovah. Not to have counseled with Jehovah's prophets, not to have followed their advice, is the certain assurance that the project will fail. Notice the fine scorn of the phrase "to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt!"

Read Isaiah 31. 1-9. This is a strong but tender plea that Judah will not turn to Egypt in order to be freed from Assyria. "The Egyptians are men, and not God."

Jehovah alone can save Judah from Assyria. He will fight on Mount Zion like a lioness for her young. As a mother bird protects her offspring, so Jehovah will hover over Jerusalem. "Turn unto Jehovah, against whom you have deeply revolted," urges Isaiah; "put away your idols, and then shall the sword of Jehovah be lifted against the Assyrian, and you shall be free."

PROPHECIES DEALING WITH ASSYRIA

Examine Isaiah 29. 1-8. To understand this section and, indeed, the entire group of oracles studied in this chapter, it must be kept in mind that Isaiah, during the latter years of his life, had two objectives constantly before him. These were (1) to prevent Judah from throwing off the Assyrian yoke to join an alliance led by Egypt and (2) to assure his countrymen that loyalty to Jehovah would lead them safely through every affliction. The preceding chapter narrates the attitude of Isaiah toward the Assyrian alliance when it was initiated by Ahaz. He had opposed that policy with all his might. But once it had been adopted, he continually counseled loyalty to Assyria. He clearly foresaw the disastrous consequences of revolt. Judah apart from Jehovah's aid was too weak to contend with Assyria. Patient bearing of the Assyrian yoke and renewed consecration to Jehovah would eventuate in Jehovah's interference in their behalf. The rescue of Judah from Assyria depended on loyalty to Jehovah.

Read 29. 1-5, which expresses Isaiah's grief at the proposed rebellion against Assyria and his prediction of its consequences. "Ariel" probably means "altar-hearth," at which sacrifices are offered. The whole city will become an altar, and its sacrificial victims will be the inhabitants slain, as the result of a false political policy, by Assyrian armies. The city, humiliated by the afflictions of the conquest, will speak humbly, like the tones of the necromancer. But this severe visitation will not be lasting. The Assyrian invasion is indeed a visitation from Jehovah; but the thunder, the earthquake, the whirlwind, the tempest, and the fire, which he directs against Jerusalem (29. 5-8),

shall pass, and Judah's foes, having accomplished Jehovah's purposes, shall be no more than "a vision of the night."

Isaiah 10. 5-27, written about 703 B. C., continues the prophet's oracles concerning Assyria. Notice the view that Isaiah takes of the coming invasion of Judah by the Assyrian armies. Assyria is the rod of Jehovah to smite Judah. Why does Jehovah visit this affliction upon Judah? What condemnation is passed upon Assyria? The student will note again Isaiah's teaching that Judah needs chastisement for her faithlessness to Jehovah, but that the nation shall not be overwhelmed utterly. What does Isaiah mean by "the Light of Israel" and "the Holy One of Israel"? What further statement is made concerning the Isaian doctrine of "the remnant"? Does Isaiah expect an exile for Judah, under Sennacherib, such as Samaria experienced under Sargon?

For a clearer view of the historical situation that called forth Isaiah's utterances at this period 2 Kings 18. 13-16 must be studied. The events described took place in 701 B. C. The Assyrian invasion here narrated and the tribute paid are corroborated by the Taylor Cylinder, a contemporary Assyrian account of Sennacherib's victories. After enumerating the conquests among the Hittites, Phœnicians, and certain Philistine cities the record runs: "I drew near to Ekron; Padi, their king [whom his rebellious subjects had deposed, because he was loyal to Assyria, and had turned over to Hezekiah, the chief of the confederacy, for safe-keeping], I brought out of Jerusalem and set him again upon their throne. And of Hezekiah, the Judæan, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six strong cities with walls, the smaller cities which were around them without number, by the battering of rams and the assault of engines, the attack of foot soldiers, mines, breaches, and axes, I besieged and captured them. Two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty men, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen and sheep without number, I brought out from them and counted as booty. [Hezekiah] himself I shut up like

a caged bird within Jerusalem, his royal city. I cast up intrenchments against him, and whomsoever came forth from the gate of his city I punished. His cities which I had plundered I separated from his land and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi of Ekron, and Sillibel of Gaza. Besides the former taxes paid yearly I added tribute and presents. As for Hezekiah the fear of the majesty of my dominion overwhelmed him, and his troops deserted. With thirty talents of gold [and] eight hundred talents of silver, precious stones, couches and seats of ivory, elephant hide, ivory, heavy treasure, and his daughters, the women of his palace, male musicians, female musicians, he dispatched after me to Nineveh, my capital. He sent his ambassador to give tribute and make submission." (*Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, Rogers, page 343f. condensed). The passage 2 Kings 18. 17 to 19. 8 is a supplementary Biblical account to be read in this connection. The appeal to Isaiah is the turn of the tide of the prophet's influence with the court. Note the confidence of Isaiah that Jerusalem, guarded by Jehovah, is impregnable, and that the Assyrian, in spite of his boasting, is under the control not of Assyrian deities but of Jehovah. The account of the discomfiture of the Assyrian army given in 2 Kings 19. 10-37 is best explained by supposing a second western campaign of Sennacherib.

Study Isaiah 10. 28-32. This section was uttered after the Assyrian army was on the march to punish the rebellious western states and before the submission of Hezekiah narrated above. It was spoken before the exact line of Sennacherib's march was known. Isaiah rightly knew that upon Judah especially would the Assyrian vengeance fall. Observe that each succeeding site mentioned brings the invader nearer Jerusalem, and that Nob is within sight of the city walls. Examine 17. 12-14 and observe the mingled terror and comfort; state the language in which each is expressed.

Turn now to Isaiah 30. 27-33. This section expresses Isaiah's final message concerning Assyria. Jehovah takes

up the cause of beleaguered Judah. Assyria will be broken in pieces, and Judah will be filled with rejoicing.

PROPHECIES DEALING WITH INTERNAL CONDITIONS IN JUDAH FROM 705 TO 701 B. C.

Isaiah 29. 9-14.—Here Isaiah severely rebukes the citizens of Jerusalem for their failure to understand the political and religious conditions of the day. Gay and careless, they do not comprehend the menace from Assyria; devoted to the ritual worship and wanting in moral insight and conscience, they offer Jehovah no more than a vain service of the lips. This message was uttered about 703 B. C.

Isaiah 30. 8-17.—The people will have none of true prophetic guidance. To be popular the prophets must declare smooth things. The truth the people will not hear. "Let us hear no more concerning the Holy One of Israel" is their rebuke of the prophet.

Isaiah 32. 9-14.—Frivolous women of the wealthy class are here upbraided for their thoughtless, worthless life. The day comes when their gay laughter shall be turned into mourning for the devastated vineyards and fields. Here is another one of Isaiah's fine etchings of the social life of Jerusalem in the days of peril. This warning was uttered within a year or two of Sennacherib's invasion.

Isaiah 22. 1-14.—Here too the citizens of Jerusalem are shown utterly callous to the danger threatening them. At a time when they should be in deep contrition and mourning in the face of impending disaster, the city is full of feasting, drinking, and merrymaking. Observe the manner in which the gayety of the people expresses itself. It was in this spirit that Judah was caught by the advance of Sennacherib.

SENNACHERIB IN PALESTINE

Examine very carefully 2 Kings 18. 13 to 19. 37. Here we have three accounts of the dealing of Sennacherib with Jerusalem and Hezekiah. Without doubt the best view is to regard the narrative of 18. 13-16 as corresponding with

the account of his campaign given by Sennacherib (see page 40). The passages 18. 17 to 19. 9 and 19. 9-37 appear to be parallel accounts of the same attempt of Sennacherib to induce Hezekiah to surrender Jerusalem. Since he was not successful in this endeavor Sennacherib was not likely to make a record of his failure. Note the religious ideas in the first of these accounts. The emissaries of Sennacherib urge that the citizens of Jerusalem should not depend on Jehovah to deliver them from the power of Assyria. Jehovah, they claim, is angered because Hezekiah has torn down his altars upon the high places of the countryside. Is he more powerful, they ask, than the gods of other nations that have succumbed to the might of Sennacherib? They urge also that Sennacherib is the servant of Jehovah sent to punish Judah. The demand to surrender the city sorely tried Hezekiah. Perhaps without the strong faith of Isaiah asserting that Jehovah would save the city and would destroy the invading army Hezekiah would have yielded. Never was Isaiah's faith put to greater test, and never was he more completely vindicated.

SUMMARY

Isaiah's teaching up to this year of calamity and deliverance (701 B. C.) may be stated thus: Jehovah is the Holy One of Israel; this holiness consists in righteousness and justice; and these qualities he demands from Judah. The nation must put away its idols (2. 8) and its dependence on ritual worship (1. 11-15) and practice righteousness. This righteousness is to admonish the oppressor, to obtain justice for the orphan, to plead the widow's cause. The state is rotten with drunkenness (28. 7), murder (1. 21), bribery (1. 23), licentious worship (1. 29), and superstitions (3. 3). Its princes are thieves (1. 23), and its priests drunken knaves (28. 7). All these evils must be purged away, and Jerusalem must become the city of righteousness (1. 27). The crowning political folly of Judah was her alliance with Assyria. This final defection from Jehovah could issue only in national humiliation. This humiliation was hastened by the rebellion

of Hezekiah. Assyria now becomes Jehovah's instrument of chastisement (10. 5). But after Judah is reduced to the verge of dissolution, a remnant within the nation will return unto Jehovah—that is, seek him with that reverence and righteousness which alone can commend the people to the Holy One; and Assyria, the instrument of punishment and, indirectly, of the nation's return to righteousness, in its turn shall be crushed for its cruelties and insolence (10. 12-15).

The invincibility of Jerusalem, Jehovah's sanctuary, is Isaiah's chief contribution to the political history of his people. Not only did the prophet's faith sustain Hezekiah in the state's darkest hour, but this creed became of much religious significance in later years. It lies at the root of Jewish Messianism. The belief itself is a part of the conviction that Jehovah is the builder of an earthly kingdom of righteousness. Such a kingdom must have a capital, and there is no other than the city of David to be Jehovah's throne. We shall study expressions of this belief in later chapters.

Isaiah, like Amos and Hosea, denounced the ritual that would permit murderers to approach, unchallenged, Jehovah's sanctuaries (1. 15, 16). Such worship was rotten to the roots and must be put away. The nearer the Assyrian affliction came to Jerusalem, the more splendid became the worship. But it was all in vain. Jehovah cries out in Isaiah that he hates the whole religious program of Judah (1. 14) and that he will no more accept such unmeaning worship (1. 15). Here we have again the clash of the priestly and the prophetic ideal of religion and worship. To-day we are sure that the prophets were the men of vision. Blood of bullocks cannot be wanted by an ethical Deity. Incense is never a substitute for righteous living. This is the mighty ethical reorganization of religion which it is Isaiah's glory to have accomplished for the whole world. Religion ever will be haunted by this ideal of ethical holiness; and whenever the moral vision lights upon the most distant son of man, he will be debtor to Isaiah, inhabitant of Jerusalem, but citizen of the world.

FOR KINGDOM BUILDERS TO-DAY

Religion Versus Magic.—Think of the vision of Isaiah. In a day when his countrymen were dragging bullocks, rams, and goats to a sanctuary to splash their blood upon an altar of Jehovah, Isaiah saw that religion is comradeship with God or it is nothing. No lamb can take away the sin of the world. No spilled blood can set a man in comradeship with God.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

Nothing less than the seeker after righteousness can draw near a righteous Deity. God cannot be bribed by a present.

The highest worship to be paid an ethical Deity is to imitate his character. “Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?” Christ calls us not primarily to believe *in* him but to believe *with* him. “If any man would come after me, let him . . . take up his cross, and follow me.” Let him have his wilderness experience, his Galilean ministry, his intimate brotherhood, his Pharisaic antagonisms, his Gethsemane, his Golgotha. Let him have these, and he will have his slopes of Bethany.

It is ever a tendency in man to confuse magic with religion, to burn incense rather than to purge the heart, to trust to external mechanism rather than the sanitation of the soul. No man’s character ever was changed by an application of water, however sacred the priest declared the water to be. A vicious business or a worldly life is not atoned for by a contribution to church or charity. Violated treaties are not set right by donations of gold. The lust that overleaps the marriage vow is not less hideous because of loveliness of disposition. Nothing deals adequately with sin but repentance and a new life.

The Test of Greatness.—Perhaps the greatness of a man is tested as in no other manner by the way he treats powerful enemies who succumb to defeat and humiliation. After Ahaz had reduced Judah to vassalage, Isaiah steadily

counseled loyalty to Assyria. This course made him many enemies. His powerful opponents, blind to the disastrous consequences of their action, were able to force a break with Assyria. Isaiah had done his utmost to preserve the nationality of Judah. He was set aside by worldly-wise politicians. But in the hour of their sad discomfiture Isaiah ceases remonstrance and denunciation. His city and nation are imperiled. The honor of Jehovah is at stake. For Isaiah country is greater than party; the cause is dearer than the humiliation of individuals arrayed against it. Isaiah now summons all his resources of faith and influence to infuse his countrymen with confidence and courage. Animosities are forgotten. Only the integrity of the state and Jehovah's purposes are remembered in the dark hour when Jerusalem is besieged.

This is true greatness. The great man cannot be insulted or humiliated. His soul is wrapped up in his cause. For it he endures everything. He does not disown his church because some member mistreats him. Because some servant of an institution or public movement betrays his trust, he does not forsake the enterprise. Because self-seeking politicians or economists narrowly oppose ideas and methods of progress, he does not lose faith in the possibility of a better civilization, nor does he cease his efforts to usher in the better day. In the midst of the grossest materialism and social ostracism he can keep his faith and lift his voice. This is the greatness of the man whom God has summoned to follow the trail of righteousness and good will.

Nations Are the Servants of God.—Nations even like Assyria are the instruments of God. A striking parallel exists between Assyria and Germany. Both nations coveted empire. Both, for their selfish ends, were ready to crush small states. To regard either empire as the servant of God for the chastisement of worldliness and sin belongs only to men of vision and faith. Yet history, read by epochs, ministers to the faith that it is God who governs nations. Germany, like Assyria, struck savagely at weaker states, yet was overwhelmed in defeat. The

war was God's way of enunciating that *right is might*. He has shown us, through our dreadful human blundering, that the destiny of any nation is indissolubly intertwined with the destinies of all; that civilization, in order not to perish, must be the common purpose and the common struggle of all nations. The nations of the earth constitute a family. Any departure from virtue and rectitude is a menace and a disaster to all. Nothing less than the recognition of the familyhood of nations and races can make possible the peace and progress of humanity. One autocracy renders democracy insecure. One armed lust of empire sets up militarism throughout the world. One thief compels a whole community to lock its doors. This is the great lesson of God taught by the world war. Like Assyria, Germany taught the world a great lesson through vast suffering. Like Assyria, Germany, once the lesson was taught, was broken and humiliated.

INTERROGATION POINTS

1. Why did Isaiah oppose the policy which made Judah a vassal of Assyria?
2. What was the platform of the Egyptian party in Jerusalem?
3. Why did Isaiah oppose their policy?
4. Why did Isaiah regard Assyria as the servant of Jehovah?
5. What were the sins of Judah denounced by Isaiah?
6. What service did religion render politics through Isaiah?
7. What did the prophet mean by saying of certain leaders in Jerusalem that they "have not asked at my [Jehovah's] mouth"? (Isaiah 30. 2.)
8. In his early sermons Isaiah apparently contemplated the destruction of Jerusalem. When and why did he change his views?
9. What elements of greatness are discoverable in Isaiah?
10. What principles of government and religion enunciated by Isaiah are applicable in our own times?

FOR THE DEEPLY INTERESTED STUDENT

The Religion of Israel to the Exile, Budde, pages 147-56.
Jerusalem, G. A. Smith, Volume II, pages 148-80.
Old-Testament History, Smith, pages 238-52.
 Article, "Isaiah," in *Encyclopedia Biblica*.

CHAPTER V

ISAIAH AND THE MESSIANIC HOPE

It is said that "hope springs eternal in the human breast." Certain it is that out of the depths of oppression and defeat there have sprung up the brightest utopias. When men ceased locating their golden age in the past and began to peer into the future to behold their ideal social order, a turning point was reached in human affairs. Of all political idealizations the Jewish Messianic hope has been the most productive of good, for out of it sprang the Christian church and the Christian conception of the kingdom of God.

This Messianic hope of the Jews takes its first definite shape in the preaching of Isaiah. Although certain expectations of his never were realized, he enunciated certain principles that ever remained in varying proportions essentials in the Jewish dream of the ideal kingdom.

ISAIAH'S DOCTRINE OF A FAITHFUL REMNANT

That Jehovah is a righteous and sovereign Deity is fundamental in all Isaiah's preaching. His call to the prophetic office was inaugurated by a vision of Jehovah's sovereign holiness. Such a Deity cannot tolerate unrighteousness among men. He will therefore punish Israel, a nation peculiarly his own, for its unrighteousness. This visitation, to purge the land of evil, in the earliest teaching of Isaiah (6. 11, 12) will result in the destruction of the state. It will be impossible for the people to avert this scourging judgment by renewed devotion to superstitions and foreign religions (28. 15) or by political arrangements with other nations (30. 1, 2; 31. 1). Read the strong words (28. 17-21) in which Isaiah declares that the purpose of Jehovah to vindicate his own righteousness by a purging judgment is unalterable.

Not long after Isaiah began his ministry, the extent of the terrible judgment of Jehovah was restricted in the thought of the prophet. He named his oldest son Shear-jashub, meaning "A remnant shall return." Wherever the boy appeared and was known he was a prediction of judgment and also of hope. This remnant was to be composed of those in Judah who turned from false religion and every form of social evil to imitate Jehovah's righteousness. "He that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy" (4. 3). This remnant evidently was regarded by Isaiah as forming a very small group (6. 13; 10. 22), but this small company of righteous men and women will become the stock of a new and glorious state.

Assyria (10. 5) is Jehovah's instrument of punishment. Jerusalem will be besieged, and the city's slain will be so numerous that it will seem an altar of sacrifice upon which the citizens are being offered to atone for Judah's sins (29. 1-4). But in the midst of Assyria's triumph Jehovah will arrest the work of destruction. Jerusalem will not be taken (10. 12; 29. 7), but, on the contrary, will raise itself aloft again in proud triumph over all surrounding nations. It is at this hour of its punishment and deliverance that the Messianic age will be ushered in.

CONTENTS OF ISAIAH MESSIANISM

The Intervention of Jehovah.—The Messianic hope, first of all, was the belief that a divine order would emerge out of the disorder of the eighth-century life of the Hebrew states. Previous studies have shown the necessity of the monarchy to deliver the Hebrew tribes from the chaotic social and political life of the period of the judges. But the later history of the kingship did not fulfill all the hopes of those prophets who had championed the nationalistic program of the earlier sovereigns. Foreign alliances for trade and war produced conditions in which sharply contrasted social classes were formed in Israel and Judah. An age of greed, lust, and brutal selfishness,

characteristic alike of prince and priest, was the curse of the two kingdoms in the eighth century. It was the mission of the eighth-century prophets to denounce the social disorders of their times. That the sins of Israel were fast leading the northern kingdom to destruction was the unswerving conviction of Amos. Hosea too looked for the destruction of the northern state, but he believed also that Jehovah's love would be able to find some way of reestablishment of the afflicted people. Hosea 2. 16-23 presents the details of the prophet's hope of the better days to follow the purging judgment. Israel will enjoy her fruitful vineyards and fields in peace, the Baals will be worshiped no more, and the people, faithful and loyal to Jehovah, will rejoice in their knowledge of his righteousness and lovingkindness. Since Hosea keenly felt the failure of Israel's kingship (13. 11), it is not likely that he expected the kingship to continue in the new social order. The new age was in some measure to be a return to the earliest years of the nation's history (2. 23).

Isaiah differs from Hosea in the starting point of his age of felicity. Hosea expected the overthrow of Israel, a return to the wilderness, and a new entrance into the land. Isaiah, as we have seen, insisted that the judgment would not overwhelm Jerusalem, and that the "return" was not geographical but ethical. Jehovah's fiery judgment would awaken the dull conscience of Judah's leaders, and they would inaugurate the better day.

According to Isaiah, Jehovah alone inaugurates the new age. The Assyrian will be checked in his victorious career not by the armies of Egypt or by Judah or by a confederation of states; "the sword, not of men, shall devour him" (31. 8). "Through the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be dismayed" (30. 31). There came to pass a strange fulfillment of this prediction. Jerusalem, as we have seen, outweathered the Assyrian storm not alone because of strong walls, but because of some circumstance with which Judah had nothing to do. In some mysterious fashion Sennacherib was robbed of the capture of Jerusalem and was forced to retreat from

Palestine. Later studies will reveal some disastrous consequences from this teaching. But at the time it was uttered it infused that faith into Isaiah's countrymen which alone saved them from surrendering to the Assyrian.

The Personal Rule of Jehovah in Jerusalem.—Read attentively 2. 1-4 and note that it is Jehovah's house which is to be exalted. This is not merely the Temple. It is, rather, the purified city, the righteousness of whose inhabitants fits them to be the teachers of the world. The actual instruction would fall to king, judge, and priest. But Jehovah is the source of the new order. Above priest and king he is the Ruler of the Messianic empire; he is the Overlord of the nations. Previous chapters make clear this fundamental Isaian truth of Jehovah's sovereignty. The student may read 30. 27-33, which so strongly declares that Jehovah's judgment is administered by himself alone. Note especially verse 31. This same conviction of Jehovah's personal rule, especially as the ground of the expected righteous social order, is found in 28. 14-22. Observe that the present social order is built on a foundation of lies and superstitions (verse 15); but Jehovah will sweep aside such false supports of the state and lay, instead, "in Zion . . . a tried stone, a precious corner stone," which will provide an immovable foundation. This foundation is righteousness and justice.

Isaiah certainly did not expect the monarchy to be set aside. The Judæan kingship, despite its evils, for Isaiah was an established factor in society. He was quite aware that the princes (3. 14) were the source of many of the ills of the state; but even in the midst of the greatest calamities, when prophet, diviner, judge, and military leader, the stay and staff of the city, have been swept away, the state is not without its King (3. 1-4). With this feeling for the kingship it was inevitable that Isaiah should look for a line of sovereigns whose abilities and virtues should fit them to be the leaders of the new social order. This expectation is the starting point of prophecies of the Messiah.

The Messianic King.—Read 9. 1-7. Observe that the inauguration of the new order of light and joy devolves upon a Judæan king. It is Jehovah, indeed, who crushes the Assyrian oppressor (verse 4), but the deliverance is to be followed by the rule of a prince who will secure for his people the expected felicities of the new age. The names applied to this new king—or line of kings—are worthy of careful scrutiny, since they throw light upon the nature of the kingdom. Four striking characterizations of the new sovereign are given: he is a wonder of a counselor, a god of a warrior, a father forever, a prince of peace. The new king is endowed with extraordinary statesmanship, he fights the battles of his people like a divine warrior, his fatherly care of his people is unceasing, and he secures for his subjects the blessings of peace. Verse 7 declares the belief that this Davidic line of extraordinary kings shall long endure, and that they shall secure their kingdom through justice and righteousness. If this divinely endowed race of kings seems improbable, let it be remembered that “the zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.”

Examine 11. 1-9. Point out the additional details in this picture of the Messianic prince. What endowment fits him for rulership in the approaching age? Note carefully what elements of character are given the Messiah by Jehovah. Observe too that the king is the judge of his people. What is the meaning of the expression “he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes”? What principles govern his administration of the laws? The student will delight in the idyllic portrayal of the peacefulness of the expected age found in verses 6-9. Observe the recurring note of Isaianic thought that ignorance of Jehovah is the source of Judah’s ills, and that when the earth is full of the knowledge of Jehovah, a universal reign of peace will be inaugurated among men. The passages 32. 1-5, 16-20 also are Messianic oracles. They have been considered above, but the student should observe that a Messianic king is responsible for the well-being of the state.

The Social Content of Isaiah's Messianism.—The land itself will respond with increased fertility to the new happiness of the people. Examine 4. 2; 29. 17; and 32. 15, 20 and state the measure of the prophet's expectation that the soil of Palestine will be more richly endowed in the Messianic age.

There is to be a moral reorganization of life. The purging judgment clears the nation of moral evil (1. 25), and Jerusalem becomes the city of righteousness (1. 26). As Jehovah's city Jerusalem becomes preeminent among the nations of earth. What is Jerusalem's mission in this Messianic age? See 2. 1-3. What great blessing is promised in 2. 4? The chief characteristic of Judah's life, after the new day dawns, is justice and righteousness (9. 7). The poor no longer are oppressed (29. 19), the tyranny of priest and prince over the weak ceases (29. 20), violence is at an end (29. 21), the helpless and the lowly never lack for justice (11. 4), judges cease taking bribes and adjudicate the cause of the orphan and the widow (1. 23-26), the people dwell quietly and confidently in their possessions (11. 6-9). The people themselves are holy—that is, righteous (4. 3). In short, it is a new age of social justice rooted in a new sense of human brotherhood.

The new state is neither communistic nor democratic. Isaiah did not predict a socialistic state. Each man possesses his own fields, vineyards, and flocks. There are pronounced social classes—king, prince, judge, and priest—still exercising authority over the commoners, who have nothing to do with the choice of their rulers. Isaiah expected all classes in Judah to be permeated by such a profound sense of Jehovah's righteousness that lust, greed, and love of ease on the part of the rulers, priests, and landowners would no longer curse the social order with selfish indulgence and oppression. There would be no embittered hearts among the poor. The cruel wrongs springing from the outrageous alienation engendered among men by wealth and power would cease in this new, intense consciousness of Jehovah's righteous rule in

Judah. Princes, priests, and judges, not insensible to Jehovah's grace and kingdom purpose—manifested in the preservation of Jerusalem, his holy city—, would seek to carry out Jehovah's demands, which are, essentially, demands for social justice. As will be seen presently, the Messianic hope is religious: it visions new knowledge, trust, and loyalty on the part of man toward Jehovah. But Messianism in Isaiah finds its outward expression in a fraternal order, wherein the sense of brotherhood is strong enough to secure peace, justice, and good will among men.

Worship in the New Age.—That which undermined the Jewish state was the people's forgetfulness of Jehovah manifested in the worship of other deities (17. 10). In the new era "men shall look unto their Maker" (17. 7). They will not seek spiritualistic mediums nor bow down to idols. Jerusalem will be the source of the religious instruction of surrounding nations (2. 3). The whole spirit of Isaiah's teaching indicates that he regarded the prophets, not the priests, as the true servants and spokesmen of Jehovah. Consequently, he must have expected that the religious leadership of the new age would be with those in whom the spirit of prophecy lived.

Isaiah says very little about the forms of worship in the projected ideal state. His insistence upon righteousness would rule out the licentious features of worship at the local sanctuaries. It will be remembered that in Isaiah's day the people were still worshipping at the various local shrines throughout the country. Worship was not yet concentrated at Jerusalem. The local high places continued to be the scenes of the great annual religious feasts and of other family sacrifices. There is no evidence that Isaiah raised any objection to these local altars or that he distinctly contemplated their discontinuance in the golden age. But with his profound sense of the sovereignty of Jehovah he could scarcely have tolerated the venerable altars set up by Solomon to foreign deities.

Isaiah nowhere states that he regards the priesthood and the system of sacrifice as essentials in the new age.

He certainly bitterly denounced the whole sacrificial system as it was carried on in his day (1. 11-15). While there is no direct evidence that he expected the sacrificial system to be swept away, because of the fact that he constantly regards the prophetic experience as the very soul of religion it is reasonable to suppose that he could contemplate with satisfaction the disappearance of the whole sacrificial system. Since the "earth is to be full of the knowledge of Jehovah," and since the exercise of religion is primarily the practice of justice and righteousness, Isaiah may have looked for a displacement of the cultus by a spiritual democracy in which each individual would enjoy an unmediated fellowship with Jehovah.

AN ATTEMPT TO REALIZE THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

The signal deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians in 701 B. C. verified in a remarkable manner Isaiah's teaching of divine deliverance and the inviolability of Jehovah's city. Hezekiah and his court, sobered by the danger and the disastrous results of the Assyrian invasion, began to heed this man of God whose political policies had not varied, and whose religious faith had not wavered even in the darkest hour of the nation's life. At last Hezekiah set himself to carry out some of the reforms upon which Isaiah insisted.

Read 2 Kings 18. 4 for the extent of this reformation of worship. That the reform was quite superficial is seen in the fact that the altars to alien deities erected by Solomon were unmolested. The ritual was not corrected. Certain country shrines were violated, and the bronze serpent was destroyed. The sacrifice offered to this serpent is a suggestive hint of the idolatrous practices against which Isaiah so strongly inveighed. Note that the author of the book of Kings believes that the idol had been long a part of Judah's worship. It is a mark of Isaiah's greatness that his religious program was too exalted for his times. A century needed to pass by before his visions were translated into the actual practices of any consider-

able portion of his countrymen. There are elements in his dreams which still are dreams for the prophets of modern civilization.

SUMMARY

The student should hold a clear conception of the terms "Messianism," "Messianic kingdom," and "Messiah." By "Messianism" is meant that strong belief of the Jewish people that Jehovah would deliver them from their enemies abroad and from the internal evils of their state and exalt them into a glorious commonwealth that should have rule over the nations. The term "Messianic kingdom" fixes more precisely the form of the state: it is, in political form, a monarchy. The Messiah is the nation's king, the anointed one, chosen and consecrated by Jehovah. While the Messianic hope frequently included a Messianic king, the Messiah is not the essential element of Messianism. The determining feature of the Messianic hope is the divinely established deliverance and kingdom.

It will be observed from the sections studied in this chapter how strongly the Messianic hope was a social ideal. This point cannot be overemphasized. If the student recalls the social disorders denounced by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, it will be clear that any vision of a better day would center in a demand for social justice and righteousness. The content given the Messianic hope by Isaiah should be well understood, for the Isaian concept is not final. Later thinkers incorporate new ideas.

FOR MODERN HOLDERS OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

To know God, says Isaiah, is the solution of the people's ills. Do you believe this? Can any permanently satisfactory adjustment of present-day wrongs be made apart from religion? Can justice and righteousness be secured in the state unless they are felt supremely to be the demand of God? This is not a question to be dismissed lightly; it is fundamental to all reform.

Do you feel keenly that your religion demands from

you justice, love, and righteousness in all your human relations? The religion that does not utter an unceasing protest against the ills of society and lift its undying cry for the better day is not a great religion: it does not bring man face to face with God. Unless worship is the glad reverence and trust with which the person who is keen to eliminate the wrongs so grievously cursing the community draws near to fellowship with Him who, too, is laboring to bring in the perfect day, it is a mockery.

The government of the world rests with the optimist. He who is convinced that "the best is yet to be" in every age will find the multitude his followers. There is a natural repulsion toward defeat. The soul covets freedom, and progress is the road to liberty. No man who really believes in God can long remain disconcerted with the world's events. He cannot keep his faith in God and despair of civilization. Nations and races come and go, but ideals are deathless; and in the long run every glorious dream for humanity shall manifest itself in deeds and institutions.

Do circumstances create the individual? Or does the individual mold his surroundings into finer forms? Measured by his own day, Isaiah does not seem to have accomplished much in changing the spirit and social practice of his age. His predictions concerning the chastisement and rescue of Jerusalem were fulfilled. But the golden age did not follow. The dream of his heart did not come true. Tradition, custom, habits, ignorance—every form of social inertia—were against him. Is it, then, worth while for the dreamer to continue weaving his ideal? Shall the reformer tirelessly beat against the solid wall of ignorance, prejudice, and greed? What is the reward of prophesying and martyrdom? This: Every bit of progress in the individual and society comes from the ceaseless beating of ideals against the bars of ancient things. It is the visioner of dawn who ever has fought the hosts of darkness. To change the world one need not have a great name; he needs only great purpose and great faith.

TAKING INVENTORY

1. What advantage to mankind accrues from the belief that "the best is yet to be"?
2. State those passages in the Bible which convey the idea that the happiest experience of men lies in the past.
3. What is the meaning of the terms "Messiah" and "Messianism"?
4. What is Isaiah's doctrine of "the remnant"?
5. What led him to put forth this doctrine?
6. To what extent was this ideal realized?
7. According to Isaiah, when and how was the Messianic age to be ushered in?
8. What was Isaiah's conception of the Messiah?
9. What changes in social conditions were to take place?
10. To what extent were Isaiah's expectations concerning a new era realized?
11. What resemblance is there between Jewish Messianism and other schemes of political idealism, such as Plato's Ideal Republic, Campanelli's City of the Sun, and Moore's Utopia?

MATERIAL FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Isaiah: His Life and Times, Driver, Chapter IX.

Prophets of Israel, W. R. Smith, pages 356-64.

The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, Knudson, Chapter XV.

Article, "Utopia," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

CHAPTER VI

THE MESSAGE OF MICAH

THE book of Micah contains not only written prophecies of Micah of Moresheth (a hill town of western Judah), a prophet who lived in the eighth century, but probably also reflects the writings of other religious teachers of succeeding generations. Students have not yet generally agreed upon the sections to be assigned to him who was the contemporary of Isaiah and who labored, in the spirit of this great prophetic age, to lift religion from unethical ritual into the vision of Jehovah's moral nature and, consequently, into the practice of social virtues. Although this uncertainty attaches to his message, he belongs worthily to the great group of prophets through whom the world first received its vision of ethical religion. He was no mere imitator of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. His messages are quite like theirs, but he possessed an independent soul and asserted vigorously and boldly his views of Judah's sins and faithlessness. Jeremiah 26. 18, 19 reveals that Micah was an influential factor in the political and religious life of the border years of the eighth and seventh centuries.

Micah's prophecies indicate that he was old enough to appreciate at the time of its occurrence the disaster to the northern kingdom wrought by the destruction of Samaria in 721. His life was determined by his belief in a similar destruction of Jerusalem. He must have lived through the Assyrian invasion of 701. In such case, although no prophecies of a restored people are extant, like Isaiah he may have believed in a near Messianic age. Under the following topics are grouped the essential themes in the sermons of Micah:

THE APPROACH OF CERTAIN DESTRUCTION

Read the first chapter of Micah. Verses 2-7 are a

threat of certain punishment to fall upon the two Hebrew kingdoms. Observe that Jehovah's residence is his holy temple not in Jerusalem but in the heavens. When he draws near Samaria and Jerusalem in judgment, the very earth suffers. The capital of the northern state will be turned into a desolate field. It is the city, wealthy and licentious, which has spread the dreadful contagion of sin throughout the state. This prediction of Samaria's destruction was fulfilled in Sargon's capture of the city in 721 B. C. Like Isaiah, Micah regarded the devastating and conquering Assyrian forces as the servant of Jehovah.

Verses 8-16 describe the approach of the Assyrian army into Judah to the very gates of Jerusalem. Micah mourns this terrible destruction and calls upon Judah to put on the signs of humiliation and grief for her captive children.

REASONS FOR THIS SCOURGING PUNISHMENT

After this chapter, expressing so confidently the destruction of the two kingdoms, there follow two chapters denouncing the sins which have occasioned the downfall of the Hebrew states. The student should note carefully the nature of the sins condemned by Micah. Sin is always some disruption of man's fellowship with men or with God. What spirit and deeds in Micah's day are breaking fraternalism in Judah? See 2. 1, 2. What penalty (2. 3, 4) is promised these covetous, oppressive landowners? Note the appropriateness of the judgment to fall upon these ruthless land thieves. What protests do these wealthy oppressors of the poor make to Micah's threat of punishment? The text of verses 6 and 7 is uncertain, but the following cannot be far from the meaning:

"Do not preach upon such subjects:

Destruction cannot come upon Jehovah's people.

Is Jehovah impatient with us? Will he cast us off?

Can he mean aught but good to his people Israel?"

The same folly is expressed by a clearer text in 3. 11, which we prefer to render:

*"Is not Jehovah in the midst of us?
No evil shall come upon us."*

Although Amos and Hosea had done their best to break down this unwarrantable folly of believing that the ancient covenant bound Jehovah to protect his people in every event, and although their history gave little basis for such belief, the people still clung to this kinship conception of man and Deity. The covenant relation was not yet ethi- cized.

The answer to this folly is Jehovah's protest to the rich (2. 8, 9):

*"You have become my peaceful people's enemy;
You strip the clothing, as in wartime, from your quiet
neighbors;
The women of my people you drive out from their blessed
homes;
From their young children you take away my glory for-
ever."*

It is not clear whether the last line means that the children are sold into slavery, or the fathers of children. In the former case the children would be orphans (2 Kings 4. 1). All this is a horrible picture of the social corruption that an unchecked greed for wealth ever introduces into society. Verse 11 adds a final touch to the infamy of Judah's social life. Micah, recognizing that his message is unacceptable to the unscrupulous rich of his day, declares that the prophet who would preach on wine and glorify drunkenness would receive a handsome salary and get it paid regularly.

Chapter 3 becomes more bitter in the denunciation of the greed and covetousness that oppress and rob the poor. Princes, says Micah, ought to be the guardians of social justice; on the contrary, they love evil. Verses 2 and 3 describe in the terms of a cannibal feast the hardships

that wealthy men inflict upon the poor. But there is a day of judgment for these hard-hearted scoundrels. In that day of reparation they will cry for mercy, but Jehovah's face will be hidden from them.

Micah rightfully pours out his scorn upon the professional prophets who have failed to insist upon economic justice. They are the truckling servants of unscrupulous and greedy merchants, landowners, and princes who feed them. They cry, "Peace" when the whole state groans with the burdens of intolerable injustice. Micah can think of no more dire calamity for a prophet than for visions from Jehovah to fail him. Yet this is their punishment. In their hour of indecision and deepest perplexity nothing but silence and darkness will meet them. There will be no answer from Jehovah.

Verses 9-12 are a summary of Judah's sins. Princes pervert the courts and destroy the hope of justice. Men of wealth beautify Jerusalem by the pauperization of labor. Priests, custodians of traditional law and custom, sell their knowledge and grow rich upon the necessities of their victims. Prophets, instead of declaring Jehovah's purposes, preach a gospel pleasing to the dominant social classes.

For these sins, sins of social anarchy, Jerusalem will be destroyed. "Is not Jehovah with us?" these greedy and antisocial leaders reply to the true prophets who threaten them in the name of Jehovah with judgment and punishment. But Micah responds in sterner tones, "Zion for your sake shall be plowed as a field."

Miscellaneous Prophecies of the Book of Micah.—The prophecies so far studied quite generally have been assigned to Micah, whose ministry paralleled the later life of Isaiah. Certain oracles in the remaining chapters, the authorship of which is debatable, are here examined, since they are similar in tenor to the accepted teaching in chapters 1 to 3 or with previously expressed prophetic thought:

(a) *Micah 6. 1-8.*—Judah's false conception of Jehovah's character and, consequently, of the worship that is acceptable to him. As in Isaiah 1. 2 Jehovah summons

heaven and earth to witness his accusation against his people. The spirit of love and pleading suggests the tenderness of Hosea. Micah cannot understand the defection of Judah. Like Hosea he feels that the course of Israel's history—a history of redemption—ought to have produced more spiritual views of Jehovah's character and purposes. The nation should have learned ere this that a ritual of animal sacrifice, however extravagantly and faithfully performed, springs from an inadequate knowledge of Jehovah's nature. Blood splashed upon a stone, the burning fat of the choicest calf, or even a human sacrifice, believed to be an efficacious way to win the favor of God, can arise only among an unreflecting people. Beneath all the licentious, superstitious worship and the social crimes lies a primitive, unethical, and inadequate conception of Deity. Hosea and Isaiah, as we have seen, bitterly complain of this ignorance of Jehovah. There is no knowledge of God in the land, affirmed Hosea (4. 1), and the destruction of Israel is due to this false conception of their national deity (4. 6; 5. 13). Isaiah is equally explicit (1. 3), and in his picture of the ideal age (11. 9) it is a fundamental that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah." Verse 8 is a beautiful summary of the eighth-century prophetic ideal of religion. It contemplates a religion without sacrifice of any kind. It lifts religion out of a butcher shop into a fraternal life of good will expressed in the home, the fields, the markets, the courts of justice, and the executive mansion. This verse should be treasured in memory. It makes a splendid motto for the home or business office.

(b) *Micah 6. 9-16.*—An arraignment of dishonest business practices and an assurance of punishing judgment. The text is frequently corrupt, but the general meaning may be understood. Scant measures and false weights, wealth gotten by lies and theft, are an abomination to Jehovah. Therefore, riches so accumulated shall vanish. The invader will snatch them away. The owner of fields, olive orchards, and vineyards who has amassed competence by the high-handed, bloody methods of Ahab

shall not enjoy the fruits of his evil deeds. His wealth shall be swept away.

(c) Chapter 7. 1-6 perhaps belongs near the close of Micah's life. If it is a genuine oracle of this prophet it reflects the terrible reaction under Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah (see next chapter). It is a dark picture. The first verse indicates Micah's isolation: His ideal of religion and the social order is ignored by all. The state is torn asunder by fratricidal suspicion and crime. High-handed greed and cruelty pursue their anarchic war unchecked. The righteous have been silenced by fear or death. The courts are the agents of crime. The state topples to its ruin.

Micah and the Messianic Hope.—There is little Messianic hope in Micah. Like Isaiah he began with denunciation of Judah's sins; unlike Isaiah he felt the full force of the Assyrian invasions of 711 and 701. He lived in a country town and felt more keenly the savage ravages of the troops of Sennacherib. With sixty Judæan towns captured, the whole countryside devastated, and Jerusalem beleaguered, there was little expectation that the capital eventually would be spared. Like Isaiah he realized the fullest extent of the rapacity, greed, and murderous intent of the wealthy nobles. These nobles dwelt in the city, and Micah could conceive nothing less than the city's destruction as suitable reward for their crimes. Chapter 3. 12:

*“Therefore, on account of your doings,
Like a field shall Zion be plowed;
Jerusalem shall be a heap of ruins,
And the Temple-mount a wooded hill.”*

Chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Micah contain Messianic material; but it is of such a nature that it seems unlikely that it was written by the Micah studied above. Like Amos with regard to Israel, Micah undoubtedly believed that nothing less than the overthrow of the Judæan state could correct its evils. Like Hosea, if he did conceive of a deliverance, it was such a vague hope (4. 10) that it

did not win a significant place in his utterances. Even his pessimism turns out optimism. Jehovah is so righteous that Judah, if she cannot practice righteousness, must be destroyed. It is better to have a righteous world or none at all.

SUMMARY

The personal history of Micah, like that of his predecessors, is a coloring element in his prophecy. We never view life wholly apart from the context of our own lives. Our theories spring out of our environment. Which one of Micah's three great predecessors most resembles him in personal history and prophetic outlook? Which of these four leaders are known to have been married, and what did married life contribute to their training and ministry?

We cannot remind ourselves too often of this prophetic ideal of religion. First of all, the religion that is destined to endure is vision of the ethical life of God. This was the starting point of each of these men and the supreme fundamental in their thought of deity. It is this insight of divine nature, conviction, and faith, so far above the customary belief of their day, which sets them so sharply against their contemporaries. From this contemplation of Jehovah they came back to the actual life of the times with the demand that the social order should reflect the lofty nature of God. In two ways the social order was not a response to an ethical Deity. Worship centered in superstitious rites—sorcery and divination—and in a ritual of idols, lust, and animal sacrifice. Such religion made no demands upon the civil, political, and economic relationships of life. When justice, righteousness, and love become the supreme elements in man's concept of deity, there arises at once the demand in the person who would enter into fellowship with his divine Overlord to reproduce like character in himself. Nor can ethical religion rest in the individual's just, righteous, and loving attitude toward God. Immediately he is compelled to treat his fellows with the same spirit and motives. A

just person is just in all his relationships, or his justice ceases altogether. It is this glorious insight by the prophets into the nature of God and of the individual's relation to him and their compelling demand for a social order responsive to the divine character which constitute the fadeless splendor of the prophetic ideal of life.

Micah may not seem to have contributed much to this ideal. But he reinforces the ideal from the life of a countryman of Isaiah's day. He is a fearless spokesman of his conceptions of truth. He cared more for righteousness than for the treasured institutions of his country. He lives in that immortal group of eighth-century Hebrew leaders to whom the world never will cease to be indebted.

CORNER STONES FOR SPIRITUAL TEMPLES

Would you test your faith in God? Attack some iniquitous custom, habit, business, or institution that yields financial profit to its promoters. The preaching directed against the source of a man's income ever is bitterly assailed. Savonarola was hanged by the business interests he condemned. Paul was mobbed at Ephesus because the silversmith's trade was threatened. Jesus was crucified because his teaching was undermining the Jewish hierarchy. Gambling, the saloon, prostitution, the licentious theater, curse society because they pay dividends. Vice lives because it enriches its promoters. The nation wars because it supposes that victory in the long run conduces to prosperity. Have Micah's heroism to denounce these profit-yielding evils. Be not afraid of iniquitous wealth.

An institution that lives on injustice has no claim upon a patriot. No true lover of his country will enlist in a war of conquest. A real patriot would rather see his country perish than live by injustice and greed. Wealth secured by pillage never enriches a man or a people. Let us learn to be poor if wealth can be secured only through dishonor; let us be content to remain unknown if fame has to be won by the betrayal of our finest selves; let us

be willing to die if life is to be preserved through disloyalty to God.

Do not think that God is obligated to do great things for you. Religion is fellowship, and any betrayal of Christ's ideals in you alienates you from fellowship with God. There is no redemption in broken fellowship. Whatever evil there is in you must be thrust out of your life. Then, with yearning heart to know God's love, you place an obligation upon his love and righteousness which issues in the drawing of yourself unto his own great Soul.

In the midst of the antagonisms and disorders of his day Micah was conscious of deep power (3. 8). He saw so clearly into the purposes of Jehovah that he knew the ultimate triumph of his ideal. That consciousness of sure victory was the source of his power. You too may move serene and sure in the midst of life's confusions. Be filled with a passion for love and justice and go forth to champion these causes, and you fight on the side of victory. This universe is backed by God, and God will preserve him who struggles in behalf of the eternal verities.

ARE YOU ACQUAINTED WITH MICAH?

1. What dates fairly indicate the periods of the public ministry of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah respectively?
2. What is known of the personal life of Micah?
3. What sins did Micah most strongly condemn?
4. In what sins do cities usually specialize?
5. What accusation did Micah bring against the prophets?
6. With what wrongs did he charge the priests?
7. What was Micah's attitude toward the sacrificial system?
8. Find the verse in the book of Micah which sums up the religious teaching of the eighth-century prophets.
9. What was Micah's thought concerning the Messianic kingdom?
10. State the resemblances and differences in the teaching of Micah and Isaiah.
11. Do you find any parallels with Micah's descriptions in economic conditions to-day?
12. What help does Micah offer in the solution of our modern economic difficulties?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Article, "Micah," *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings.

The Prophets of Israel, W. R. Smith, pages 287-94.

History, Prophecy, and the Monuments, McFadyen, Volume II, Book VII, Chapter VI. A careful and illuminating survey of the social conditions that led to the overthrow of Samaria and the destruction of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEUTERONOMIC REFORM

THE precise date when Hezekiah's long reign ended is in doubt. It may have been as late as 686 B. C. The exact date of Isaiah's death is unknown. It is quite probable that he did not live long after the Assyrian retreat in 701 so remarkably confirmed his faith in the indestructibility of Jerusalem. We have seen that Micah, a younger contemporary of Isaiah, had no such hopes of Jerusalem's inviolability as had Isaiah and that he lived to experience something of the bitter reaction under Manasseh. The present chapter is a study of the sad conditions under Manasseh, which stirred the disciples of the eighth-century prophets to undertake a reform of worship in the reign of Josiah.

THE REIGN OF MANASSEH

Manasseh came to the throne of Judah probably in 686 and reigned until 641. The deliverance of Jerusalem from sack in the reign of Hezekiah did not free Judah from Assyrian vassalage. The reign of Manasseh coincides with the period of greatest domination of Assyria in the west. Esarhaddon (680-668) led his troops to the conquest of Egypt, and the Assyrian suzerainty was maintained through much of the rule of Ashur-bani-pal (668-626). Both these princes maintained Syria and Palestine in vassalage, and the imperial records of their reign mention Manasseh among their tributary kings. Their annual tribute undoubtedly was borne by Judæans to Nineveh, and Judæan soldiers were compelled to march with their Assyrian masters in the Egyptian campaigns. Several Palestinian towns were occupied by Assyrian governors and troops. In the excavations at Gezer two clay tablets, dated 649 and 647 respectively, dealing with the

sale of an estate and the transfer of a field reveal the fact that while Assyrians, Egyptians, and Hebrews were living in this ancient city, the official language was Assyrian.¹ These instances of Assyrian dominion in Palestine inadequately suggest the influence which this mighty empire under its greatest kings exercised over the small, weak Judæan state. Manasseh's long reign was peaceful for the sole reason that he attempted no rebellion and faithfully paid the Assyrian tribute.

This political situation enables us to understand the religious condition of these years. Isaiah's predicted golden age had not come. The judgment had not fallen upon Assyria. On the contrary, that nation's hold upon the west was greater than ever. Isaiah and his disciples were discredited before the nation. The court, probably expressing the views of the large majority of the nation, turned with new zeal to the cultus that the eighth-century prophets had so insistently condemned. Read 2 Kings 21. 1-18 for the historian's account of the sins of Manasseh. With regard to worship Manasseh turned the development of religion backward in two particulars:

(a) He gave a new impetus to the Babylonian worship of the luminaries of heaven. It is stated in 2 Kings 21. 3 that Manasseh "worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them." Verse 5 adds, "He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Jehovah." From 2 Kings 23. 4, 5 we learn that this astral cult had its various altar utensils and priests. Where were these altars located? See Jeremiah 19. 13; Zephaniah 1. 5; and 2 Kings 23. 5. Job 31. 26, 27 is a witness that this star worship continued for centuries. What details do these verses from Job add concerning the manner of worship of this star cult? Jeremiah 8. 2 indicates something of the extent of this worship in Jerusalem. Deuteronomy 4. 19 and 17. 3 express the horror in which this worship was held by the reformers of the seventh century.

¹ See *Bible Side-Lights From the Mound of Gezer*, Macalister, page 338.

Another aspect of this worship of the heavenly bodies is found in 2 Kings 23. 11. These horses, white in color, were stabled within the Temple precincts near one of the entrances of the Temple. They were quite likely introduced by Manasseh. The horses were not sacrificial animals. Harnessed to the chariots, they were driven in procession toward the east at the rising of the sun. Primitive people frequently have accounted for the sun's movements by supposing that he was a god riding in his chariot. The savage supposes that he can cause changes in the natural world by some imitative act which magically causes the natural phenomenon. The horses and chariots of the sun undoubtedly first were used by primitive Semitic people, who supposed that the harnessing of the horses at dawn and the driving of the chariot thereby compelled the sun god to awaken from his sleep and set forth in his chariot to bless the world with light and warmth.

The worship of the heavenly bodies assumed another form, which evidently was quite popular. Read Jeremiah 7. 18; 44. 15-30. "The queen of heaven" quite probably was the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, who was identified in the eighth and seventh centuries with the planet Venus. In the Babylonian texts of this period Ishtar is called "Ishtar of the Stars," "Queen of the Stars," "Queen of Heaven," and other similar titles. The references in Jeremiah show that the worship essentially was a woman's cult, that cakes of a special kind were made and burned on the altars of the goddess, and that the offering was accompanied by libations and was performed in various cities as well as in the streets of Jerusalem.

(b) All this display of Babylonian worship gave a new impulse to old Canaanitish cults, which, although in some measure repressed by Hezekiah, had characterized Hebrew worship since the earliest centuries in Palestine. Study again 2 Kings 21. 1-18 for the details of this revival of Canaanitish practices. Observe that Manasseh built again the high places destroyed by Hezekiah, reared altars for Baal, set up an asherah within the Temple,

practiced augury, used enchantments, recognized mediums, introduced sacred prostitutes into the Temple (2 Kings 23. 7), and offered human sacrifice. Baal was the common Semitic name for deity. There were innumerable Baals. Each high place had its Baal. When the Hebrews first entered Palestine, the worship of the Baals was taken up and carried on side by side with the worship of Jehovah. In the course of time the name of Jehovah was substituted for the various Baals. The eighth-century prophets denounced this worship, although in the name of Jehovah, as heathenism. It is probable that the words "he reared up altars for Baal" means that the old ritual, essentially a Baal ritual, was encouraged at the various high places. The asherah was a wooden post, sometimes carved (1 Kings 15. 13), and perhaps occasionally draped (2 Kings 23. 7). Its use at the sanctuary is disputed. The sacrifice of the first-born child seems to have been widely prevalent. "Over the whole area of the high place the earth was discovered to be a regular cemetery, in which the skeletons of young infants were buried. These infants never were more than a week old. They were deposited in large jars, and with them were placed smaller jars, possibly for food for use of the little victim in the other world. Two at least of the skeletons showed marks of fire. We have here evidence of the widespread custom of devoting the first-born; a part of the practice whereby the first fruits of man, of beast, and the field were sacred to the divinity."¹

This introduction of Assyrian worship and revival of Canaanitish practices did not take place unchallenged by those citizens more loyal to Jehovah and those who had learned from the prophets something of the spiritual and ethical character of deity. Manasseh stamped out all open opposition by wholesale murder (2 Kings 21. 16) and forced by his cruelties those who cherished other beliefs to hold them secretly. He did not of course crush all worship of Jehovah. Sacrifices to the national

¹ *Bible Side-Lights From the Mound of Gezer*, Macalister, page 73.

Deity still continued, but they were neglected and minimized by this revival of heathenism.

THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

(a) Manasseh's long reign ended in 641. His son Ammon ruled for two years. Josiah, the son of Ammon, came to the throne in 639 and held the scepter of Judah until 608. Josiah's elevation to the throne apparently ended the open persecution of the prophetic party, but the worship established under Manasseh continued unchanged for a period of eighteen years.

The earlier prophecies of Jeremiah and the ministry of Zephaniah belong to this first half of Josiah's reign. Read Zephaniah 1. 4-6, 8, 9 for hints of the Assyrian and Canaanitish worship studied above. See also Zephaniah 3. 1-4 for the general corruption of the state. The atheism regarding their national Deity is expressed in 1. 12. Zephaniah, like his predecessors, prophesies an overwhelming judgment. This prophet, especially like Amos, proclaims a "day of Jehovah," and for him, too, it is a day of judgment. Note especially 1. 15-18. Like Isaiah, Zephaniah cherished the Messianic hope. Read 3. 11-17. After the judgment will dawn a new age, in which there shall be no iniquity, no lies; but Jehovah will dwell in the midst of the restored community, the King of Israel.

Read Jeremiah 1. 16; 2. 11-37; chapters 3 to 5. These sections are additional testimony to the deplorable religious and social conditions existing through the reigns of Manasseh and Ammon and also down to 621 in the reign of Josiah.

(b) In the year 621 there occurred an event that changed the course of Judah's religious history. The account is found in 2 Kings 22. 3-20.

Note the mission of Shaphan. After the business of the repairs was finished, what new matter was broached by Hilkiah? What was done immediately by Shaphan? What report did he make to Josiah? What effect did the reading of the book produce in the king? What were the king's first orders? Note that the book was a "book

of the law" and that it had been found by Hilkiah in the Temple. Did the king question its genuineness? What caused the king's consternation? In what manner did the king's servants "inquire of Jehovah"? What was the answer?

For the inauguration of the reform study 2 Kings 23. 1-3. What was the king's first measure? What solemn covenant was made by Josiah? What position was taken by the people with reference to the proposed reform? Examine attentively 2 Kings 23. 4-15 for the details of the reformation. Observe that they consisted in (1) a purging of the Temple of the Assyrian and Canaanitish worship, (2) the suppression of the local sanctuaries scattered throughout the kingdom, and (3) the destruction of the sanctuaries erected by Solomon to the gods of his various foreign wives. Josiah, following the requirements of the newly discovered law book, inaugurated a change in the celebration of the ancient Passover festival. Read 2 Kings 23. 21. What other reforms were put through? (2 Kings 23. 24). What else is known of Josiah? (2 Kings 23. 29, 30). How does this event correspond with 2 Kings 22. 20?

SUMMARY

It comes with a surprise and almost with a shock that the ethical interpretation of religion so impressively proclaimed by Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah penetrated so little the worship of their times. The signal deliverance of Jerusalem, accepted in 701 by Hezekiah and his court as a mark of Jehovah's favor and power, failed to inculcate loyalty to him. The stress of economic circumstances dislodged Jehovah from his supreme place in the life of his people. Assyrian overlordship induced a time-serving court to imitate the fashions, customs, and worship of the nations that had become Judah's master. Zephaniah 1. 8, 9 indicates how deeply Assyrian influences permeated Judæan society. Foreign customs were introduced, and styles of dress were imitated. This belief that the worship of Assyrian gods conduced to national pros-

perity was so deeply rooted in Judah that the reform under Josiah did not permanently eradicate it. It is probable that the Tammuz worship (Ezekiel 8. 14) was introduced under Manasseh and, after being suppressed for a time, again was practiced openly within the precincts of the Temple. Sun worship too had revived (Ezekiel 8. 16), and Ezekiel throws light upon the manner in which it was performed. Even the destruction of Jerusalem did not eliminate these cults from Hebrew life. An assembly of men and women, fugitives from Jerusalem in Egypt, openly declared to Jeremiah that they would have none of his Jehovah worship (Jeremiah 44. 15-19); that all the calamities of the downfall of the southern kingdom were due to their failure to continue the worship of the queen of heaven, which had been so faithfully performed in the days of Manasseh and Josiah by their fathers, kings, and princes in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem.

Yet the reform under Josiah was no insignificant expression of Hebrew religious life. It was, as the next chapter will show, a splendid triumph of prophetic religion. Without this sudden recall to Jehovah worship and to a more spiritual and ethical interpretation of his will the religion of the Hebrews would have been submerged by the cults of their conquerors. It is a splendid testimony to the clearness and the strength of the prophetic vision of Jehovah that it withstood the Assyrian influence under Manasseh, lifted its burning protest under Josiah, and held aloft under succeeding kings through the tragical years of the nation's downfall and exile its demands for the sole worship of Jehovah, expressed in humble devotion to him and in justice and righteousness among men.

In rereading the sections of the books of Samuel and Kings and the prophetic sermons studied previously it will be seen that hitherto there had been little or no appeal to codes of law. The sins of Israel and Judah interpreted by the prophets were not transgressions of well-known law codes: they were violations of thoroughly un-

derstood principles of justice and humanity. Previous to Josiah's reform there was of course a gradually enlarging body of religious and civil law. These laws were, in the first place, the decisions of the priest at the various sanctuaries. Under the monarchy, at least in the eighth century, there were local judges regarded as representatives of the king. Civil and religious law in the Hebrew state were not clearly distinguished, and the priest and judge frequently overlapped jurisdictions. The point here made is that Josiah's changes in the religious life of the state were promulgated by an appeal to a code of law, and that such an appeal is an entirely new departure in Hebrew history.

CONFORMERS AND TRANSFORMERS

Manasseh and Josiah are permanent types of character. Manasseh, yielding to Assyrian influence, made no permanent contribution to Hebrew civilization; Josiah, setting himself against the evils of his times, impressed his moral faith and heroism upon the world. The one was a conformer; the second was a transformer. We belong to one or the other class. Conformers are played upon by their surroundings until their life is molded and their destiny is shaped by external forces. Conformers stone the prophets, adorn the sages with cap and bells, worship will-o'-the-wisps, lift self-seekers to the throne, and follow charlatans, who trick them out of their liberty and live upon their toil. Conformers acquiesce in the petty and mean in human affairs. They are the prey of prejudice, gossip, rumors, and lies. Such men do not know why they are in the world. They never hear God calling them to help redeem the world; they would not think it worth redeeming if they did.

The conformist is a putty man. If the world wears high-heeled shoes and red socks, he must wear high-heeled shoes and red socks. If it smokes, he must get him a box of cigarettes. If it owns a chariot of the sun or an automobile, he must mortgage his house to ride fashionably. Conformists never bring in a minority report; they follow

the crowd to the christening of a child or the lynching of a murderer. Conformers never discover worlds, never originate nations, never explore continents, never name the stars. They never started reformations, never advanced the cause of liberty, never freed a slave, never honored woman, never lifted a burden from a child. They never accepted a purer religion, never formulated a higher philosophy, never revealed a nobler science, never wrote world-poetry, never died for the truth. For them there are no problems, no paths to unseen goals, no angel visitants setting up ladders to heaven, no faint songs sounding in the dead of night from far spiritual cities, no tang and push of soul to be a knight-errant in the cause of truth.

Conformers have eyes, but they are in the back of their heads; they have ears, but they are stuffed with cotton; they have noses, but they never smell the stench of civic unrighteousness; they have lips, but they are dumb with the apathy of sordid minds; they have hands, but they are struck with moral paralysis; they have souls, but they are shrunken with fear, abased in sensuality, and imprisoned hopelessly in the fashions of the world.

Transformers are a class of supermen. All that is essentially valuable in human achievement has been done by them. True creative work is theirs alone. They give new meanings and directions to human life. It is they who flash the ideal in awakening dawns across a slumbering world and arouse hope and victorious struggle in the despondent epochs of mankind. The transformer knows that he is supremely soul; he knows that the universe is fundamentally spiritual; he knows that he can go forth to live consciously with God. He treads the high places of the earth; he builds the habitations upon the hills; he lives with the stars; he thinks in eternities; he pitches his tent in the camping places of Almighty God.

Transformers consider themselves masters of life. They are the shapers of events. They are potters, and the world is their clay. They know they are on earth not to have a good time but to run a great race, to finish a great task,

to fight the good fight. Life for them is not an excursion, a picnic, a vacation, a picture show. They realize that life is never a gift but a conquest. They see that they win manhood and womanhood not in pursuit of a career but in surrendering themselves to a great cause. They know that the road to greatness crosses the summit of a Golgotha. They try not to save their lives but to lose them in a thousand ministries. They find peace not in banquets, not in touching gold, not in the flaming cup, not in passion's hot embrace; they know happiness in following afar the vision of a world redeemed from ignorance and sin and in losing themselves to this their chosen cause of God.

Be a transformer.

INFORMATION WANTED

1. What prediction of Isaiah's concerning political events remained unfulfilled?
2. Why should Judah's vassalage to Assyria affect disastrously Hebrew religious life?
3. What is meant by star worship? To what extent did it obtain in Judah? Give some details of the manner in which such worship was carried on.
4. What influences led to the resurgence of the Canaanitish worship of the Baals? What were the "high places"? Describe some features of this Canaanitish religion.
5. What were the prophets doing in the reign of Manasseh?
6. What religious practices of the reign of Manasseh and Josiah were condemned by Jeremiah? by Zephaniah?
7. What social conditions were adversely criticized by these two prophets?
8. Study closely and answer carefully all the questions raised above in the discussion of the law book found in the Temple.
9. What is the unique thing in Josiah's reforms?
10. State the differences in character between Manasseh and Josiah.
11. How many transformers are there in your community?

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

Old-Testament History, Smith, pages 254-76.

Articles "Manasseh" and "Josiah," *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings.

The Second Book of Kings, Farrar, Volume II, Chapters XXIX-XXXI, in "The Expositor's Bible."

CHAPTER VIII

DEUTERONOMIC PROVISIONS FOR WORSHIP

THE preceding chapter discussed the discovery of a law book in the Temple of Hilkiah in the year 621 B. C. and the inauguration of this code as the law of the realm by a popular assembly. The reforms undertaken by Josiah in compliance with the new code also were noted. The student is aware of the uniqueness of this event. We have met no similar establishment of a body of law in our study of Hebrew life. The covenant made at Sinai at the threshold of the people's history, although it involved certain requirements of obedience and loyalty, did not include a wrought-out code. Our studies have made no reference to Hebrew law, and there have been but few notices of the administration of either civil or ecclesiastical law. Therefore, the appearance of a written code solemnly adopted by the people is a unique event in Hebrew life.

This book of law, which was the basis of Josiah's reforms, is now found in chapters 5 to 26 and 28, with few exceptions, of our present book of Deuteronomy.

SUMMARY OF EIGHTH-CENTURY PROPHETISM

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah were practical monotheists. The majority of their contemporaries believed in the reality of other gods. As Jehovah was the God of the Hebrews, so other nations had their deity or deities. It was expected that Jews who took up their residence in other lands should worship the gods of the people in whose midst they lived. Foreigners who settled in Palestine as a matter of course worshiped Jehovah. The great prophets were the first to claim universal sovereignty for Jehovah. Perhaps at first the claim was no more than

that Jehovah was superior to other gods; but presently the doctrine was advanced that he is God alone. Jehovah rules the nations. See Amos, chapters 1 and 2; Hosea 12. 9; Isaiah 2. 12-22, and many other references in these prophetic writings. Jehovah supplants the Canaanitish deities as Lord of Palestine (Hosea 2. 8-13, 17-20). His original dwelling place was at Mount Horeb, but he finally, in the thought of the Hebrews, made Palestine his own land.

Through the prophets, also, was made known Jehovah's moral character. The student will recall the stern demands for justice uttered by Amos in the name of Jehovah. Justice is Jehovah's supreme characteristic (3. 2; 4. 1-3; 5. 14, 15, 21-23). Hosea added that Jehovah's justice is tempered by compassion; that he loves guilty Israel (2. 19, 20; 11. 1-4); that righteousness and goodness are rooted in his nature (4. 1; 6. 4-6). Neither can one forget the inaugural vision of Isaiah, which planted so positively in him the conception of Jehovah's righteousness. In the teaching and life of these prophets Jehovah was not a Deity exalted merely by power; he was to be worshiped and obeyed because of his matchless character. He was the embodiment of those virtues which ever are necessary for fellowship between persons.

Jehovah's supreme demands from men are moral demands. The student will recall the severe denunciations of the worship at the sanctuaries uttered by this group of prophets. They were not condemning the fact of sacrifice at the many high places but they did excoriate the unreflective and licentious character of this worship. Examine Hosea 4. 17; 8. 4, 5; 13. 2; Isaiah 2. 18-20; 30. 22. Micah (1. 7) condemned the use of images. The spiritual Jehovah cannot be represented by material forms. The elaborate ritual and sacrifice accompanied by feasting and sensuality cannot bring man into right relation with Jehovah. These prophets were willing that the whole sacrificial system should be abandoned; but they were insistent that men should hear Jehovah directing them to that moral service which upbuilds the community.

RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS AND PROVISIONS IN THE LAW
BOOK OF JOSIAH

Jehovah Alone to Be Worshipped.—Read Deuteronomy 6. 4-15 and 11. 13-21. Observe the impressive and beautiful words of this essential creed of Jewish religion to this day. "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," the injunction begins; and then follows the admonition to love him whole-heartedly and to beware of having anything to do with other gods. There are many other passages of like import. The code is a continual insistence that Jehovah alone is Israel's God. No other is to be worshiped; no other has had aught to do with Israel's history; no other can secure the nation's future glory. This only claim of Jehovah upon the worship of Israel is set forth in stern demands: All those who worship or solicit others to worship any deity except Jehovah are to be put to death (12. 29 to 13. 18).

The chief inducement of the immigrant Hebrews to worship other gods is well put in 12. 30. The Hebrews, in fact, did ask this very question: "How do these people of Canaan serve their gods?" and in the first years of their settlement in Palestine worshiped the local deities as well as their own Jehovah. In the course of time Canaanitish practices were so much assimilated by the Hebrews that practically the old Baal worship of Canaan was carried on in the numerous high places in the name of Jehovah. The prophetic reformers are now trying to eliminate the grosser features of this amalgamated worship by calling attention to the manner in which it had originated. Observe that the most obnoxious of these persistent features of Canaanitish practices is the sacrifice of children (12. 31).

The basis of this demand that Jehovah alone shall be worshiped should be carefully noted. Jehovah, out of his great goodness and love, chose the Hebrew people to be his own people (7. 6-8). This love led him to redeem them from Egyptian bondage and to make a covenant with the founders of the nation. He never has repudiated this

covenant, and his love is still turned toward his own. The history of the Hebrews is a history of this ministering love (8. 2-10). Yet Jehovah's love is not such that transgression goes unpunished. Instances of such punishment are cited (11. 2-7), and the present generation is sternly warned not to take advantage of this compassionate love.

Regulations Concerning Worship.—(a) *The place of worship.*—The law of the single sanctuary: (1) Destruction of the high places (Deuteronomy 12. 2-4). The student will recall that worship at the many scattered sanctuaries went on unchallenged for centuries. Hosea is the first to question in any way the legitimacy of this worship. No one of the prophets advocated their destruction. It was left to these Deuteronomic writers of this new code to insist upon their abandonment in favor of the Temple. This was now for the first time possible. The northern kingdom was no more; Judah was only a small territory. But even so it involved a striking change in the people's beliefs and practices. (2) The single sanctuary (Deuteronomy 12. 5-19). What sanctuary, though not expressly named, does the writer have in mind? Were earlier worshipers not conscious of meeting Jehovah at other altars? Recall Solomon's visit to Gideon (1 Kings 3. 4) and similar practices in the earlier history. Observe that this code contemplates not only a destruction of the worship imported by Solomon for the sake of his wives and by Manasseh from Assyria, but also the cessation of all Jehovah worship at scattered altars. Worship is now to be centered at Jerusalem. Since sacrifice, in this code, is still the customary expression of worship, observe the positive demand that it must be offered at the central sanctuary (Deuteronomy 12. 13, 14, 17, 18). (3) Examine 12. 15, 20-27. These verses are extremely interesting. Note that so long as sacrifice takes place at the local altars, all killing and eating of animals is sacrifice. When all sacrifice was ordered by this code to take place at Jerusalem, either the ordinary killing of animals for food had to take place at Jerusalem, with great inconvenience to daily life, or the killing of animals for food must be de-

clared nonsacrificial. Which way out was taken by the reformers? Note that this legislation wipes out the old distinction of clean and unclean sacrificial animals (12. 15-22). The blood, however, formerly an essential element of the sacrifice, retains enough of this sanctity in the thought of the legislators that it must not be treated commonly; it must be poured out upon the ground.

(b) *The law of tithes.*—Examine 14. 22-27. This provision should be observed carefully. Undoubtedly it is the earliest Old-Testament legislation on this subject.¹ What things are tithed? What disposal is made of the tithe? Amos 4. 4 indicates that this tenth of the produce of the soil, together with the firstlings of flock and herd, was used in a sacred feast at the various local sanctuaries. What change in the disposal of the tithe, then, does this Deuteronomic law contemplate? Why is the change insisted upon?

(c) *The law of firstlings.*—Read 15. 19-23. The student will observe the sanctity of the first-born male of flock and herd. Such could not be used in labor, but must be offered to Jehovah in sacrifice. Consult Exodus 20. 24 for an earlier law. Here, too, in pre-Deuteronomic days, the firstlings were sacrificed at the local altars. The change is in the interest of the one sanctuary and the one Deity.

(d) *The annual agricultural feasts.*—(1) The Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread (16. 1-8): Here, too, the chief change is the transfer from local shrines to the central sanctuary at Jerusalem. (2) The Feast of Weeks (16. 9-12): The Harvest Feast also was a festival older than the Deuteronomic age. Earlier laws are found in Exodus 23. 16; 34. 22. This festival too was celebrated at the local sanctuaries. The Deuteronomic law fixes the date of the festival seven weeks from the first beginnings of the grain harvest and limits the celebration to the Temple at Jerusalem. See Deuteronomy 26. 1-11 for the ritual of the sacrifice at such occasions. (3) The Feast of Tabernacles (16. 13-15): This is an ancient autumn feast, called

¹ See *Deuteronomy*, Driver, page 168f.

in the earlier legislation the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23. 16; 34. 22). The present code withdraws the feast from its local observance to (and legalizes it only at) Jerusalem and fixes the length of the feast.

(e) *Various laws dealing with improper worship.*—Asherahs and Mazzebahs condemned (16. 21, 22); blemished animals unacceptable for sacrifice; divination and spiritualism condemned (18. 10-14); sacred prostitution proscribed (23. 17, 18); vows not to be lightly ignored (23. 21-23).

(f) *Religious persons.*—(1) Priests: These in the Deuteronomic age are known also as Levites (17. 18 to 18. 1, 6-8). The Levites who have had charge of the various local sanctuaries shall go to Jerusalem and share alike in the labors and rewards of the Temple priests (18. 6-8). Josiah was not able to put the country priests upon an equality with their brethren of the Temple. See 2 Kings 23. 9. (2) This code contemplates a succession of prophets (18. 15-22). The prophet is the chief interpreter of the divine will. The truth of his predictive statements is the attestation of his office.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEBREW LAW

In any primitive community custom is the law. The head of the family is the judge who administers the affairs of his clan according to the established usage. When the Hebrews entered Palestine they carried with them undoubtedly a group of commandments engraved on stone setting forth certain regulations of worship. Those in charge of the ark, by some form of sacred lot, rendered decisions in cases where the head of the clan felt that the case required a divine judgment. This clan rulership is illustrated in the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) and in the headship of Joash in Ophrah (Judges 6. 30). But with the entrance into Canaan and the assumption of more settled forms of life the authority of the clan chief gradually gave way to the older men of the villages, who rendered decisions according to customs. Judges 11. 4-11 illustrates this stage of Hebrew administration of

laws. New situations arose from time to time, and these elders naturally gave new interpretations to old precepts or formulated new usages to meet new conditions. These elders constituted the judiciary of Israel for centuries. The rise of the monarchy did not greatly disturb their prerogatives. The king was the chief judge, and in the course of time there were associated with him certain officials who were his representatives. The reigns of David and Solomon offer illustration of this arrangement. Naboth's trial before the elders and nobles of Jezreel (1 Kings 21. 8) indicates a fusion of the ordinary villages and royal courts. Even under such conditions decisions were rendered according to ancient practice.

During these centuries there were innumerable cases where the elders who were in perplexity or the individual seeking light in a doubtful hour turned to the sanctuary for the judgment of Jehovah. Such judgments were rendered by the priest, who, being more conversant with usage, rendered his decision according to the custom, or who manipulated the sacred lot, and the decision thus reached was accepted as the judgment of Jehovah.

In the course of time the ancient practice was codified. This first written Hebrew code, with the exception of the Sinaitic tables, is known as the Book of the Covenant. This is found in Exodus 20. 2 to 23. 19. This includes a Decalogue, certain regulations of worship, and various laws dealing with property. Exodus 34 undoubtedly contains equally old written regulations. The elders of villages and towns are the judges presupposed by the Book of the Covenant. These earliest written laws codified the prevailing practice and were intended for the use of priests in their decisions at the sanctuaries.

The development of Hebrew law did not cease with this codification in the ninth century. Elders and priests constantly were expanding older regulations to meet new conditions. The Deuteronomic Code was not an entirely new body of laws. Its comparison with the Book of the Covenant shows its dependence on the earlier legislation. The new code is chiefly concerned with the uprooting of for-

eign worship, the limitation of worship to Jerusalem, and certain humanitarian provisions in response to the social preaching of the eighth-century prophets. This latter element will be examined in the following lesson.

SUMMARY

From the preceding chapter, as well as from this study, the student will observe the importance of this Deuteronomic Code: (1) It was the basis of Josiah's reforms. (2) It was adopted in a public assembly as the code of the realm. (3) It contained the revolutionary provision of the central sanctuary and the consequent varied changes in the social and religious life of the people. It gave a new meaning to sacrifice. (4) It was based upon the prophetic demand for the sole worship of Jehovah, the end of idolatry, and social justice. (5) It did not rise to the spiritual heights of the prophets in two particulars: (a) It clung to the sacrificial system as the mode of worship. Perhaps these lawmakers understood the conservatism of the people better than did the prophets. At any rate, they deemed that the time had not yet come for a nonsacrificial worship. (b) It gave no hint of a Messianic age. It is probable that the author of the code believed that its acceptance and practice would constitute that golden era of which Isaiah had dreamed.

The student cannot overstudy this important body of laws. It was a turning point in many ways in Hebrew religious life. It is the beginning of the death of prophetism and the first definite forecast of the legal Judaism of later centuries. But it enforced in a new way the monotheism of the prophets and perpetuated that vision for the world.

STUDIES FOR THE QUIET HOUR

What is the relation between law and life? To what extent must a law embody custom to become effective? Why do we have so many dead laws upon our statute books? Ask some attorney to estimate the number of laws

in your State toward the enforcement of which little or no effort is made.

To what extent is reform by law possible? Does this depend on the form of government? In America what is the chief support of law? In what cases is one justified in the violation of law? What must be the ultimate sanction of law?

In Josiah's reforms we have an instance of the wise regulation of worship by the state. Is the separation of church and state in America a sound political principle? If compulsory education is justifiable, why is not an enforced moral and religious training conducive to the welfare of the state? Is the opposition to the state's religious and moral instruction of the youth due to the fact that such position is fundamentally wrong or to the practical difficulties of such education? If the principle is sound, ought not all educators, both secular and religious, to give themselves unweariedly to devise some method of religious and moral training authorized and enforced by the state?

This code was formulated in one of the darkest hours of Hebrew history. The reign of Manasseh seemed to have undone the hard-won results of the great prophets. But in these years of disloyalty to Jehovah and to his noblest champions other servants of his were bringing together the neglected laws, giving them new interpretations, and making new demands of Judah in the name of Jehovah. Defeat for the man of God is the summons to another battle. However much our civilization seems shadowed by war, greed, and lust, we may labor on unweariedly to uphold the cause of righteousness. The kingdom of God cannot be set aside by the ignorance and passions of men.

"Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God." Here is something new in religion. During the whole of the nation's past men had been taught to stand in awe before Jehovah and, often, to fear him. The fathers of the nation trembled in fear before the thunderings of Sinai (Judges 5. 4, 5). "The fear of Jehovah" had become a synonym of religion (Isaiah 29. 13). Men had been taught to worship Jehovah,

to offer sacrifices to him, to refrain from careless and insincere use of his name in daily speech; but they had not been taught that their first duty was to love him. How shall we cultivate love for God? Out of what situations among human beings does true love spring? What originates and maintains the love of husband and wife? Acquaintance, similarity of interests, experiences undergone together, common ideals and struggles—these are the woof and warp of full, enduring love. The color of the eyes, the tale of years, the housing of the home—these are incidental in the epic of their love. The love that lives is truly spiritual. We can learn to love. Let us seek His interests and objectives, and we shall draw near him and be drawn unto him.

Hebrew fathers were exhorted to teach the love of Jehovah to their children. To teach love is the Deuteronomic ideal. We teach a multitude of other things. We teach our children deception, suspicion, selfishness, pleasures, desire for wealth, snobbishness, love of display, craving for praise. We teach them arithmetic, music, and dancing. Germany taught her youth war. During a half century her youth were instructed in the "superiority" of German civilization and the mission of Germany to extend her civilization into other lands. We teach class distinctions and race antipathies. We organize propagandas for and against every public issue. It is time that we taught love. We can teach good will. We can cultivate fraternalism. We can inculcate love for God. The proposed Hebrew method never has been surpassed. When religion—not a catechism—is systematically taught to children; when it is the subject of daily conversation; when it manifests itself in the books, magazines, pictures, and music in our homes; when it takes precedence over business; when it appears a living, lovable, and essential part of our daily life, then we will teach naturally love and religion. All vital religion is taught. Its ideas, its experiences, its conduct, flash their truth and reality from one generation to another. But we must know what we would teach to others.

ADDITIONAL TESTS OF LESSON MASTERY

1. Upon what did the Deuteronomic Code base the demand that Jehovah only should be worshiped?
2. What constituted the offense in the worship of other deities?
3. What provision of the code was the most revolutionary?
4. What significant change was made in the killing of animals for food?
5. What use according to this code was to be made of the tithe? What sources of income were tithed?
6. Why did these reformers put a stop to the worship of the local sanctuaries?
7. What became of the country priests?
8. What distinction was made in Israel and Judah between civil and religious law? Who were the administrators of the law?
9. What new spirit now pervades Hebrew law through the adoption of the Deuteronomic Code?

VALUABLE ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

Deuteronomy, G. A. Smith, in "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." No single volume offers the student so much help. The introduction to this commentary is exceedingly worth knowing.

Article "Deuteronomy" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and also in *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings, Sections IV and VII.

Articles "Law and Justice" and "Law Literature" in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* may be consulted for the development of Hebrew law.

CHAPTER IX

DEUTERONOMIC PROVISIONS FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

IT will be recalled that the eighth-century prophets insisted upon social justice and righteousness. Greed of power and wealth, love of ease, and sensual desire had well-nigh destroyed the last vestiges of the old clan brotherhood in both Israel and Judah. These prophets pleaded for a social reorganization of Hebrew society. Humanitarian motives were the crying need in every department of Judah's life. So insistent was this need that the prophets believed that social justice and love were the supreme expressions of religion. Micah's summary of religion will be remembered: "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (6. 8).

The Deuteronomic writers responded to this humanitarian appeal of the prophets; they attempted to introduce into Jewish law the prophetic social ideal. They did not go as far as the great prophets in minimizing sacrifices but they planned more than the priestly order would practice.

HUMANITARIAN PROVISIONS

The Amalgamation of War.—(a) *Exemptions from military service.*—(1) Release from service was granted to the man who had built a house and had not yet dedicated it. Among primitive Semitic peoples to-day a new house must be dedicated by a sacrifice. "Every house must have its death—a man, woman, child, or animal." To sacrifice an animal redeems the inmate of the house from disaster. Hence, to enter into war with the dedicatory sacrifice unoffered subjects the man to the maximum chances of death. (2) The man who had not yet par-

taken of the fruits of his vineyard was exempted. Since it was not until the fifth year after planting that the vintner could enjoy the rewards of his labor, the provision seems intended to give a man a chance to enjoy the blessings of his labor before he shall be required to jeopardize his life in battle. (3) The humane motive is apparent in the dismissing of the man engaged to be married.

(b) *Treatment of captured cities.*—It was the accepted belief among primitive Semitic peoples that the inhabitants and their possessions found in a captured city should be utterly destroyed. Mesha, king of Moab, on the famous Moabite stone states that he devoted an entire town in this manner to his deity. The narrative in 1 Samuel 15 expresses the same conception. As this latter narrative indicates, however, there was being developed the feeling that this was a harsh procedure. The Deuteronomic legislation embodies this growing humane sentiment. Examine Deuteronomy 20. 10-18.

(c) *Preservation of the enemy's fruit trees.*—Read 20. 19, 20. The barbarous practice of destroying fruit trees was not uncommon in ancient times. Assyrian monarchs resorted to the destruction of orchards in their campaigns. Even Israel once thought it a justifiable method of attack (2 Kings 3. 19, 25). In the light of events in the war with Germany the Hebrew legislation shines exceedingly luminous in its morality.

(d) *Consideration for captive women* (21. 10-14).—Ordinarily women taken in war became at once the concubines of their new masters.

Family Relationships.—(a) *Sex relations.*—A comparison of Exodus 22. 16, 17 with Deuteronomy 22. 28, 29 shows the attempt to make seduction a less attractive offense against the social order. Divorce is discussed in 22. 18, 19, 28, 29; 24. 2-4. Exodus 21. 7-11 deals with the dismissal of a slave-wife. Neither code goes far toward securing woman an equality with man. The woman, even in the later code, possesses no right to divorce her husband. Adultery is severely punished (Deu-

teronomy 22. 22-24). Religious prostitution is forbidden (Deuteronomy 23. 17, 18). The levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25. 5-10) is another survival of the unfortunate subordination of woman to man. For the perpetuation of the name of a childless husband the woman is ruthlessly sacrificed. Yet it is probable that in some measure this levirate law is an amelioration of earlier conditions. Deuteronomy 21. 15-17 secures the property rights of the first-born son against an unjust favoritism.

(b) *Servants and slaves*.—The prompt payment of the day laborer (24. 14, 15) is a fine humanitarian provision, which undoubtedly corrected a flagrant abuse. The humanitarian difference of the two codes is strikingly illustrated in the provision affecting the manumission of slaves. Study Exodus 21. 2-4 and Deuteronomy 15. 12-15. What advance is made in the later legislation? Both codes provide for permanent slavery (Exodus 21. 5, 6; Deuteronomy 15. 16, 17). What is the difference in method? What provisions are made for the religious life of slaves? (Deuteronomy 5. 14; 12. 17, 18; 16. 10-11). What is the rule for fugitive slaves? (23. 15, 16). What class of slaves is here contemplated?

Consideration for the Weak and Dependent.—(a) *Alien residents in Judah*.—For a variety of reasons men and women from other states settled more or less permanently among the Hebrews. Ruth, a Moabitess, took up her residence with her mother-in-law in Bethlehem. Such persons were deprived of the protection and support customarily given the individual by his family or clan. These alien residents often must have felt their insecure social position. No code of laws previous to the Deuteronomic legislation secured them any legal rights. There was the injunction not to oppress these sojourners (Exodus 22. 21). They were required to observe the Sabbath (20. 10) but they were not to share in the Passover (12. 45). The Deuteronomic Code declared that Jehovah loves these strangers and commands the Hebrew also to love them (10. 18). Loans made to them, as well as to fellow Hebrews, must be without interest (23. 20), and such

loans are to be canceled in the year of release (15. 3). The provision for the payment of wages of the poor laborer at the close of the day includes the sojourner (24. 14). Justice is enjoined toward these resident aliens (24. 17). These provisions are a distinct advance in humanitarianism.

(b) *Kindness and justice toward widows, orphans, and other poor.*—These persons are under Jehovah's special protection, and any injustice or want of kindness toward them will be brought to account (10. 18). The continued presence of poor persons is recognized (15. 7-11), and it is the duty of the propertied Hebrews to befriend and aid their economically weaker fellow citizens. They must not take in pledge the necessary household articles (24. 6); the lender of money must not enter a man's house to select the article to be mortgaged (24. 10); the pledged garments of the poor must be returned each evening for the latter's use (24. 13); the wages of the poor must be paid daily (24. 15). The clothing of a widow must not be taken in pledge (24. 17). Orphans and widows must be permitted freely to glean in the grain fields, vineyards, and orchards (24. 19-21). They are to share in the distribution of the third year's tithe (24. 19) and are to participate in the feasting of the annual festivals of sacrifice (16. 11, 14).

(c) *The Levite.*—Note the special provision for the Levite along with other dependents. Study 14. 22-27 and observe what is done with this tithe for two successive years. What disposition is made of the third year's tithe? (14. 28, 29; 26, 12-15). In this last section observe the three acts which would have desecrated the tithe.

(d) *Note the provisions against stealing land (19. 14) and false weights and measures (25. 13-16).*

Kindness to Animals.—In two instances the prevailing humaneness of this code is extended to animals. The ox and ass are included in the old provision for cessation of work on the Sabbath (5. 14), and the ox used to trample out the grain on the threshing floor is not to be muzzled (25. 4).

The Administration of Justice.—(a) *The courts.*—Read 16. 18; 19. 11; 17. 8-11 and state the provisions for the securing of justice. It will be noted that the judiciary is in process of transition. In some cases the elders of the city constitute the tribunal. What cases are brought before them? (22. 13-16; 25. 5-10; 21. 18-21). It is quite probable that the judges were selected from the elders and were intended to constitute a smaller and, therefore, more effective court. Note the constitution of the supreme court in 17. 8-11. It is probable that the judge of verse 9 is the king and that he associated with himself the Jerusalem priests in this court of appeal. What cases might come before this court?

(b) *Principles for guidance of the courts.*—Read 16. 19. An early law of similar purport (Exodus 23. 6-8), according to the witness of the prophets, had been sadly disregarded. What provision for punishment graded according to guilt is given in 25. 1-3? Note the provision for contempt of court in 17. 12, 13. An exceedingly significant regulation is found in 24. 16. Compare this law with the incident in 2 Kings 14. 5, 6. The compiler of the book of Kings, writing a considerable period after the event and later than Josiah's reform, here refers to the Deuteronomic Code. This historical note of the sparing of the innocent members of a guilty family is the earliest reference to a change from the primitive rule that regarded all members of a clan equally guilty with the actual committer of the crime. This individualization of guilt and punishment is a striking advance in Hebrew thought. It not only is a break from barbarous cruelty but it opens the way for the spiritual worship of the individual; it denotes a deepening significance of individual life. A sense of social obligation and responsibility is an element of the highest civilization, but equally necessary is the feeling that the individual, in the last analysis, is the unit of life.

(c) *Examine the law of witnesses* in 17. 6, 7; 19. 15-21. To what extent would such methods prevent unjust accusations and just trials?

Laws Relating to the King.—The qualifications and duties of the king are stated in 17. 14-20. Recall the various kings of Israel and Judah and state the limitations of the kingship here imposed. Examine too the qualifications for citizenship treated in 23. 1-8.

HUMANITARIANISM AND JUSTICE

It is not to be understood that the Deuteronomic legislation did not contain severe penalties or that it rose to modern heights of humane conceptions of social relationships. Stern penalties were provided for infractions of the principle that Jehovah alone is to be worshiped. Death is the common penalty for all who worship other gods or who solicit worshippers for non-Hebraic rites. The law regarding the cities of refuge illustrates the combination of humanitarianism and severity and at the same time exemplifies the stern sense of justice which pervades the code.

Read 19. 1-3. In former times all persons who had killed another were subject to the law of blood revenge. It was the duty of the nearest of kin of the slain man to avenge his death. The actual murderer, if he were known, was slain at once by the interested relative or was turned over to the relatives of the dead man for punishment by death. If the actual murderer could not be apprehended, any member of the clan or family of the murderer could be substituted to receive the death penalty. See 1 Kings 2. 28-33. Those who had slain another usually sought refuge at a sanctuary (Exodus 21. 12-14; 1 Kings 1. 50). When the law of the single sanctuary was introduced by the Deuteronomic Code to protect excusable homicides from the punishment required by the custom of blood revenge, it was necessary to designate certain cities to be asylums for those who had committed manslaughter. If the elders of such cities were convinced that the killing was intentional, the murderer was delivered to the kinsmen of the slain man, who promptly put the criminal to death. This seems to be the first provision for any public and official determination of the guilt of the homi-

cide. It is the first legislation in Hebrew life which distinguishes between accidental and intentional killing. It is the only Semitic legislation which does not compromise murder by the payment of fines.

SUMMARY

It already has been stated that this Deuteronomic law book, which was found by Hilkiah in the Temple in 621 B. C. and which was the basis of the reforms of Josiah, was written in the reign of either Manasseh or Josiah by persons who had caught the spirit of the great eighth-century prophets. The study of the code has made this evident. It is based upon older legislation, but even in case of ancient laws nearly every one of them is given new interpretations and additions that demand a more spiritual worship and a greater expression of humanitarianism and social justice. The language of 7. 6-8 is an example of this prophetic inspiration of the codifiers of the book of law. "Thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God" is a reflection of Isaiah's inaugural vision, and the assertion that Jehovah had chosen Judah above all peoples is an echo of Isaiah's triumph in the deliverance of Jerusalem and his Messianic hope. The love of Jehovah so often declared and the answering love of Israel so eloquently pleaded for by Hosea and the social justice demanded by all the prophets everywhere are evident in this seventh-century compilation of law.

A new departure is the code's insistence that the people should become conversant with the law. Read attentively 6. 4-9. This passage and 11. 13-21 and Numbers 15. 37-41 make up the famous Jewish Shema, or confession of faith. This Shema is taught to children before they learn to read and is included in the morning and evening prayers of every pious Jew. The New-Testament student will recall Christ's estimate of the opening words (Mark 12. 29). The student ought to memorize 6. 4-7. Knowledge of the law and reverence for it ever are fundamentals of good government.

This chapter, with the preceding two, must impress the

student that Deuteronomy is one of the world's epoch-making books. It profoundly affected the whole of subsequent Jewish life. The prophets raised the question, What doth Jehovah require of thee? The Deuteronomists answered, as the prophets had answered: We must love Jehovah with every element of our very being. His love surrounds us and constantly ministers to us. We must return his love by an uncompromising and abiding affection. This affection for Jehovah will express itself in justice and kindness toward all his creatures. The socially insecure must become the objects of the love and generosity of the more favored. The nation is a community of brothers. The state is a family. It is impossible to be religious and at the same time be wanting in the humane social virtues. This union of religion and social service is the code's abiding glory.

QUESTIONS FOR CIVILIZATION BUILDERS

The leading element of the seventh-century Hebrew ideal of human welfare is material prosperity. Large families, numerous flocks and herds, and abundant crops (Deuteronomy 28. 11) are the Deuteronomist's conception of a prosperous state. Will an increasing, well-fed population guarantee a perfect social order? Is the goal of human life happiness for all? To what extent is human happiness dependent on wealth? Are people living to-day as if they believed that happiness depended on well-dressed and well-fed bodies? If wealth in itself is not a guarantee of happiness, would an equality of wealth make men happy? If we hold that happiness is dependent on bodily comfort, how shall such wealth be secured to all? If we agree that wealth is not fundamental to human happiness, how shall we go about enlightening the ignorant people who still think wealth a guaranty of the satisfied life?

This Deuteronomic legislation sets up an ideal of human kindness. It is an attempt to embrace all Hebrews in one family and so instill in the rich and powerful a fellow feeling for the humblest member of the state. To what

extent is such sentiment an essential in civilization? Is such brotherhood possible in a social order whose members stand upon a widely contrasted economic footing? Can human brotherhood exist in a state whose citizens range from paupers to plutocrats? Could it be absent from a state whose every citizen is a millionaire? What forces in to-day's civilization are making for human brotherhood?

The Deuteronomic Code is largely the embodiment of the vision of Hebrew eighth-century prophets. If humanitarian preaching must precede humanitarian law, is there not cut out for you both opportunity and duty? Are you not in error to attack no abuses because you have no political power? The preacher is ever the pioneer of the legislator. All wrongs must be denounced by the prophet before they are condemned by a code. An evil must be made a vice before it can be a crime. You may not be in position to label an injustice a crime, but as long as God gives you breath, you can proclaim it a vice. The legislator makes a thing a crime; the prophet makes it a vice. If you believe in God, your work is cut out for you. Set yourself so vigorously against the evils of the day that your sons will write your visions and your denunciations into laws.

MEASURING RESULTS

The student should seek to get a clear conception of the Deuteronomic social ideals. Reexamine this code in the light of the following questions:

1. What forms of political and judicial government are contemplated?
2. What is the source of the nation's laws?
3. What provision is made for additional legislation?
4. What form of economic social order underlies this legislation?
5. What industries are the sources of wealth?
6. What ideals of marriage and the home are reflected in the code?
7. What is the status of women?
8. What educational and benevolent institutions are fostered?
9. What is the attitude toward alien races?
10. How does this correspond with previous prophetic teaching?

11. Judging by this code, what is the Hebrew seventh-century ideal for a people's welfare? (28. 1-25, 38-40).

12. How is such welfare to be secured?

13. What provision is made for the enforcement of the code?

14. To what extent is public opinion recognized to be the ultimate guarantee of law enforcement?

15. Judging by the social and religious conditions at the time the code was promulgated, what is the likelihood that this body of law will be enforced?

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR STUDY

Deuteronomy in "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges" is a most excellent commentary. Note especially the discussion of "Tithes" (pages 192-7); "The Year of Release" (pages 198-206); "Cities of Refuge" (pages 236-40); and "Levirate Marriage" (pages 286-8).

The Old Testament in the Light of To-Day, Bade, Chapter VIII, is an appraisal of the ethics of Deuteronomy.

CHAPTER X

JEREMIAH: PROPHET OF JUDAH'S DECLINE

THE preceding three chapters carried the political history of Judah to the year 621 B. C. This was the year of the discovery of the Deuteronomic law book and the reforms inaugurated by Josiah to carry out the provisions of this code. This chapter and Chapters XI and XII deal with the remaining history of the southern kingdom until the end came in 586 B. C. The leading figure in this sad period is Jeremiah. The student will be well repaid for a most painstaking study of this fascinating character.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF JUDAH'S DECLINE

Josiah, the reformer, lived about thirteen years after he had given the state a constitution, in 621 B. C. There is little known of these years. In view of the fact that within a few months after his death there was a sad lapse toward the conditions under Manasseh it is probable that Josiah was kept busy during these years endeavoring to establish fully the provisions of the code. Read 2 Kings 23. 29, 30 for the account of Josiah's death. The Assyrian Empire was breaking up before the Medes and Babylonians. The nation no longer was able to impose its iron rule upon the west. This was Egypt's opportunity. In 608 B. C., Necho II led his armies to recover the west land for the empire of the Pharaohs. Josiah, either as a vassal of Assyria or, more likely, on his own initiative, marched to give the invader battle. According to 2 Kings 23. 15-20 Josiah was free to impose his reform of worship upon various sanctuaries in the former territory of Israel. It is not improbable that Josiah was impelled by the hope of extending the boundaries of Judah to the former limits

of Solomon's kingdom. Jeremiah 3. 12, if it belongs to the times of Josiah, may have encouraged this prince in an effort to widen the boundaries of his kingdom.

Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, held the throne of Judah only three months. See 2 Kings 23. 31-33 for the account of his death. Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, was set upon the throne by Necho II in 607, and Judah became the vassal of Egypt. Necho's prosperity was short-lived. The Assyrian Empire was dismembered in 606 by the Medes and Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonian troops to retake the western provinces from Egypt. He met Necho at Carchemish, 605 B. C., and defeated him. Judah again became the vassal of the east. Read 2 Kings 24. 1. Jehoiakim's revolt was not immediately punished in force. The passage 2 Kings 24. 2 indicates Nebuchadnezzar's plan to harass the Judæan state until he could lead a western campaign to subjugate the kingdom. Jehoiakim inherited from his father the impending doom of Nebuchadnezzar's wrath. This Babylonian prince led his army to capture the rebellious city. The passage 2 Kings 24. 8-17 (with the exception of verses 13, 14) preserves this account of the surrender of Jerusalem and the first captivity. This occurred in 597. Other western cities fell to Nebuchadnezzar, who returned to Babylon with his captives and tribute. During the next eight or nine years Nebuchadnezzar for some reason gave little attention to the west. This relaxation of Babylonian control gave Egypt another opportunity. Zedekiah, uncle of Jehoiachin, whom Nebuchadnezzar raised to the throne in 597, listened to the Egyptian lure (Jeremiah 37. 5-7) and revolted against Babylon. Read 2 Kings 24. 18-20. There could be only one end to such folly. The account of the capture of Jerusalem is given in 2 Kings 25. 1-22. Study this narrative until the details are familiar. The date is 586. The history of the southern kingdom ends with this catastrophe. But the fortunes of the scattered people are followed a few steps further in 2 Kings 25. 23-26. With the flight into Egypt a hopeless shadow pall the fortunes of the Hebrew state.

JEREMIAH AND THE STATE

Important Events.—During the forty or more years of Jeremiah's ministry there are six events of outstanding importance which greatly influenced his prophetic messages. These are the Deuteronomic reform under Josiah in 621, the death of Josiah in 608, the reaction under Jehoiakim, the battle of Carchemish in 605, Jehoiachin's surrender of Jerusalem in 596, and the sacking of Jerusalem in 586.

Jeremiah, as we have seen in a previous chapter, began his ministry before the promulgation of the Deuteronomic Code in 621. It is a moot question what part he had in this reform. He had nothing to do with the composition of the book. But it is not unlikely that he entered sympathetically into the effort to purge worship of its heathenism. Although the priestly conception of worship voiced by the code was foreign to Jeremiah's thought, there was enough of good in it to enlist his support. Read Jeremiah 11. 1-6. The prophet's championship of the code brought him into collision with his own townsmen of Anathoth. Why did the advocacy of the reform incense them? (11. 18-23). Jeremiah's praise of Josiah (22. 15, 16) suggests also that he would have found it easy to cooperate with such a prince. There is every reason to suppose that had the spirit of this Deuteronomic legislation really possessed the hearts of the people it would have won Jeremiah's support to the end of his life.

Moral and Religious Relapse.—It will be recalled that the Deuteronomic Code promised the people a God-fearing king (Deuteronomy 17. 14-20), a prosperity, a numerous population, and a wide empire (11. 22-25). Josiah, conscious of fulfilling Jehovah's demands, may have gone up to Megiddo to meet Necho expecting a great victory. The latter part of his reign had verified the promises of the Deuteronomic legislation. Josiah had endeavored to conform the state to the law's requirements. Prosperity, peace, and the outlook for extension of territory followed. Then came the king's death and the defeat of the army in

608. By the Deuteronomic theory this was inexplicable. The reformers were discredited by this tragedy and the sudden fate of Jehoahaz. A reaction set in in favor of the religious practices introduced by Manasseh. Preachers like Jeremiah were out of favor. A new wave of corruption spread across civil and religious life. The courts failed to secure justice (Jeremiah 7. 5); orphans, widows, and aliens, contrary to the Deuteronomic injunction, were oppressed; theft, adultery, false oaths, treachery, lies, oppression, and murder were outstanding evidences of the social anarchy that was hurrying the state toward its bitter end (9. 3-9; 10. 10; 9. 4; 22. 3). Even the prophets committed adultery, walked in lies, and strengthened the hands of evildoers (23. 14). A similar riotousness characterized worship. Foreign deities again had altars and worshipers (7. 6; 11. 10); astral worship was a common practice (19. 13); the cult of the queen of heaven was reintroduced (7. 18); idolatry was widespread (11. 13; 13. 10; 18. 15; 19. 4); human sacrifice again was offered in the valley of Hinnom (7. 31; Ezekiel 20. 26). Ezekiel adds other details of the religious lapse under Jehoiakim. A form of animal worship, some mysterious cult, was practiced by prominent citizens within the Temple (Ezekiel 8. 7-13). The Adonis cult again prevailed among the women of Jerusalem (8. 14, 15); the worship of the sun openly was carried on within the sanctuary of Jehovah (8. 16-18).

JEREMIAH'S POLITICAL MESSAGES

An Indictment of the Nation's Responsible Leaders.— Upon whom did Jeremiah place the responsibility of this condition? Read Jeremiah 22. 13-19. Of what crimes does he accuse Jehoiakim? What is Jehoiakim's conception of the kingship? What is Jeremiah's idea of the duties and prerogatives of a ruling prince? What is the inevitable end of the ruler who mistakes his office? Examine also 23. 1, 2 for Jeremiah's position that the chief blame for the impending ruin of the state rests with Judah's kings. Examine 7. 21-23; 8. 2; 13. 13, 14; 14. 18; 19. 1; 23. 11;

26. 7-9, 16. What is Jeremiah's attitude toward the priesthood? Of what evils does he accuse the priests? Note that he places upon them, as well as upon the princes, the responsibility for the ills of the state. Jeremiah regarded the priestly order as the chief bulwark of the false doctrine of Jerusalem's inviolability, the upholders of a disastrous and unspiritual conception and practice of worship. Observe especially 7. 21-23. This is a far-reaching arraignment of centuries of Hebrew worship. Jeremiah boldly asserts that the whole priestly scheme of life is inimical to Jehovah's rule.

The prophets too were untrustworthy leaders. Examine 8. 1, 2; 13. 13, 14; 14. 18. What sins does Jeremiah attribute to them? Read 14. 13-16. What is the burden of the message of these "false prophets"? Was their prediction fulfilled? What constituted their falseness? Were they insincere conscious deceivers or were they merely unable to read rightly the signs of the times? Was it their fault that they cared more for the comforts of a quiet life than for the advocacy, in the midst of peril, of a great cause? Read also 23. 9-32. Here the prophets are accused of gross sins, their messages are denied a divine origin, they encourage lawlessness and irreligion by their sermons, they mistake their dreams for the word of Jehovah. Chapter 28 gives a specific case of one of these false prophets and his message. What was Hananiah's message? (28. 2-4, 11). What gave him his unwarranted confidence in the continuance of the Hebrew state?

The Nation's Future.—Early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah delivered a sermon in the Temple in which he gave his expectations of the future destiny of his people. This discourse is found in 7. 1 to 8. 3. Additional details are given in 26. 1-9. Examine 7. 1-15. Observe that the Isaian faith in the safety of Jerusalem in 701 has become a dogma of the city's inviolability by 607. Thinking that they had the "temple of Jehovah," the people believed themselves secure. In what did Jeremiah ground the hope of the nation's permanence? What example is offered of Jehovah's treatment of a sanctuary defiled by

ethical misconduct? What is his portrayal of the nation's future? (7. 32; 8. 3; 9. 10, 11; 18. 17; 26. 1-7). Examine too 13. 20-27 for the emphatic statement that the Jewish state is so habituated to evil that its collapse is inevitable.

Jeremiah clearly foresaw the capture of Jerusalem in 597. See 13. 18, 19; 22. 24-30. Yet he did not preach the annihilation of the Hebrew and his religion. Read the beautiful parable of the potter in 18. 1-4. What is the lesson intended here by Jeremiah? See also the hope that he extends to the first band of captives (24. 1-6). These exiles carried to Babylon in 597 were settled in certain villages along the Kabar Canal. They were not dispersed but, living in a colony, were able to preserve their laws and customs. Jeremiah's letter to these exiles (29. 4-14) promises them, though not a speedy, a sure return to Jerusalem. The seventy years is a round number.

Jerusalem was captured and sacked by the Babylonians in 586. The siege lasted approximately a year. Jeremiah constantly advised submission. Read 21. 3-10. During the siege the Egyptians approached Palestine, and the Babylonians temporarily raised the siege (37. 5). Previous to this apparent deliverance, in the stress of the siege, the Hebrew slaves had been set free by their repentant masters in accordance with the demands of the Deuteronomic Code. But as soon as the danger seemed passed, these freedmen were reenslaved. This perfidy of the people did not escape the scathing denunciation which it deserved. See 34. 8-22. During the final siege Jeremiah was imprisoned. His counsel to surrender the city angered the authorities. The whole account is interesting (37. 11 to 38. 28).

Yet in the very hour of Jerusalem's destruction Jeremiah heroically expressed his faith in his people's future. Read 23. 6-15. By the purchase of an ancestral field at the hour it was overrun by the enemy Jeremiah expresses his confidence that the fields of Judah are yet to be tilled by the Jewish people. It is a strong assertion of the restoration of the people.

After the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was liberated from confinement by the Babylonians and given his choice of going to Babylonia or remaining in Palestine. He chose the latter (39. 14). Gedaliah, the governor, fixed his capital at Mizpah. After the latter's assassination the mere remnant of a nation was without a head. Counsels were divided. Some were urging a retreat into Egypt. An appeal was made to Jeremiah, who advised them to remain in Palestine. This advice was disregarded, and the leaders, taking with them many others, departed for Egypt. It is not known whether Jeremiah was forced to accompany these voluntary exiles or whether he chose to remain with them to the end. At any rate, he accompanied them to their new home at Tahpanhes and was loyal to the prophetic mission until he died.

SUMMARY

A careful study of all the foregoing discourses of Jeremiah in the light of their historical setting makes clear the great service he rendered the world's religion. Had no other voice been raised than that of the false prophets, the sacking of Jerusalem would have silenced Hebrew religion. They proclaimed the inviolability of the state: that Jehovah had taken up his residence in the Temple and that he would not suffer his people to be dispersed. The reality of religion was thus made dependent on the permanence of the state. Jeremiah exalted Jehovah above any such frail scheme. Jehovah was the divine Potter, and the marred nation might be broken at the wheel, yet his purposes not be thwarted ultimately. Jeremiah divorced religion and the state. He could see the state perish yet proclaim that religion, in the very destruction of the state, was the more truly realized and vindicated.

Amos and Hosea likewise looked for the destruction of the state, but they did not look beyond the penalizing blow to a reconstruction of the world's religion. Isaiah too prophesied the ruin of Judah, but he was confident that a remnant would arise in the midst of the overthrow to reorganize Hebrew life on prophetic lines. Jeremiah was

the first to accept definitely for the southern kingdom the same fate that had overtaken Samaria. But there was a clear program for the future. The exiles were to live quietly in their foreign home and keep their ideals shining, and in Jehovah's good time they would be returned to their ancestral cities and fields. Jeremiah cared more for religion than for the state. He was quite ready to sacrifice political independence to win his people from a demoralizing ritual of worship and anarchic social practices to ethical conduct and spiritual religion. Jeremiah counted.

ADVICES TO STATESMEN

There are three fundamental principles upon which to build an enduring state: justice, love, and brotherhood. All human relations must be governed by justice. A sense of unfairness and wrong, sooner or later, will dynamite the most solidly constructed institution. But justice must be prompted by love. Love must be interpreted by brotherhood. Slaves and masters have loved each other; but slave love and master love will damn civilization. Brother love alone will consecrate the state. No institution, no business, no custom, no nation, can win permanence otherwise. All institutions based on privilege, injustice, or distrust will pass away. God is King. His rule will ultimately hold sway.

Any nation's chief need is prophetic statesmen: counselors whose first concern is not prosperity but righteousness. It seems incredible that a twentieth-century nation should debate unweariedly armaments, banking systems, harbor bills, commerce, and fleets, and tolerate with so much unconcern widespread prostitution, pernicious carelessness of the public health, the evils of degenerate society so glaringly revealed by eugenics and the juvenile courts, and the want of moral and religious education by the state. What permanence is assured the state for which big business is a more pressing theme than *just* business? How may we help to give *just* business its proper place?

You may not be in any legislative body; but neither are

many of our statesmen. Public opinion is the great legislator everywhere. If you will you may be a prophetic statesman. If you are ready to endure misunderstanding, scorn, social ostracism, and poverty for the sake of justice and righteousness you will not live in vain. But if you prize comfort and ease above the championship of Christ's kingdom, God will not intrust you with that spiritual vision which is essential in great leadership.

QUESTIONS TO TEST KNOWLEDGE

1. What assistance was given by Jeremiah to Josiah in carrying out his reforms?
2. To what extent did the reforms introduced by Josiah change the religious and social life of the people?
3. What political changes took place at the end of the seventh century among the nations surrounding Palestine?
4. How much had the teaching of the false prophets to do with Josiah's political policy which ended in his death?
5. What was Jeremiah's condemnation of these prophets?
6. In what manner had the priests failed to exercise a wise leadership?
7. What doctrine of Isaiah's became a source of deception for the nation?
8. To what extent did Jerusalem suffer from the Babylonians in 586 B. C.?
9. Why did the Babylonians treat Jeremiah with so much consideration?
10. What future did the prophet foresee for the Hebrew people?
11. What did Jeremiah contribute toward the permanence of Hebrew religion?

REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Jeremiah, in "The Expositor's Bible," is a pleasing and profitable exposition of this prophet.

Old-Testament History, Smith, pages 274-300.

History, Prophecy, and the Monuments, McCurdy, Volume III, Book IX, Chapters V and VI; Book X, Chapters I-IV.

CHAPTER XI

JEREMIAH: PROPHET OF PERSONAL RELIGION

THE preceding chapter made clear the peril in which the world's religion stood during the years from the death of Josiah to the sack of Jerusalem in 586. The Deuteronomic Code, the basis of Josiah's reform in 621, was nominally, at least, the stay of Judah's life. The code was a continuous promise of national welfare in return for loyalty to the Temple and its worship and the practice of certain humanitarian virtues. Josiah had made an earnest effort to conform the kingdom to this code. But Josiah was cut off in battle, and priests and prophets had no new counsel at this strange turn of affairs. The people, neglecting the code, revived the worship and the lawlessness of the days of Manasseh. The state was drifting steadily to ruin. Religion was purely a national affair, and Judah's religion, like Israel's, was doomed to disappear with the exile of her citizens.

It was Jeremiah who divorced religion from the state and made it live, not in the Temple of sacrifice but in the soul. He taught his countrymen that the state might perish, and still religion could live, more vital for its divorce from its ancient external supports. In this chapter is traced the rise of spiritual and individual religion in Jeremiah's life and teaching.

JEREMIAH'S PERSONAL HISTORY

Birthplace, Family, and Character.—Of Jeremiah, as of the other great prophets of the Hebrew people, there is little to be known beyond that which appears in his public utterances and actions. From Jeremiah 1. 1 and 29. 27 it is known that he was born at Anathoth, a town two or three miles northeast of Jerusalem. He came from a

family of priests who owned land at Anathoth (32. 9). In this village Jeremiah spent his boyhood and in course of time might have exercised the functions of a priest. Apparently he took up his residence in Jerusalem at the time Josiah began to inaugurate his reforms. Jeremiah early recognized the futility of reforms carried through by state authority (2. 3), and his individual inheritance of character, responding to the political and religious conditions of the day, soon unfitted him for the priestly office. He was passionately interested in the welfare of Judah. His reflections upon the conditions of the state deepened within him the necessity of absolute dependence on Jehovah. His beliefs consequently brought him into constant conflict with the leaders of the state. Yet he pursued his course unflinchingly. His own townsmen plotted against his life. He had no family of wife and children to enter sympathetically into his life. His career became one long, lonely martyrdom.

Jeremiah's Call to the Prophetic Office.—Examine 1. 4-19. The beginning of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry was about 626 B. C. Note the deep conviction that his mission is a divine appointment. Observe too the breadth of his parish. These two ideas—namely, that he is the child of destiny and that he is Jehovah's mouthpiece for the nations—are fundamental to the understanding of Jeremiah's career. Is his conviction that Jehovah had planned his life even before his birth a key to his unswerving loyalty to his mission? Why was Jeremiah reluctant to enter upon the prophetic career? Did such office involve personal danger? Judging from the prophets already studied, to what sort of career was he summoned? With what assurance did Jehovah overcome his reluctance? What did it mean to Jeremiah to say that Jehovah's hand had touched his mouth, and Jehovah's words were in his mouth? What did his prophetic commission involve? From 1. 17-19 may it be inferred that Jeremiah naturally shrank from adverse criticism and that, knowing his message would arouse bitter adversaries, he trembled to follow the promptings of his soul? In

what way was he fortified for his work by believing himself the sent of Jehovah?

The Training of a Prophet.—Read 15. 10-21. Jeremiah's struggles did not cease with his call. This experience takes place after several years of ministry. The prophet had been received with bitter hostility. By his rebuke of the people's vain trust in the Temple he had aroused the opposition of priests and prophets. He had assailed the luxury-loving Jehoiakim and incurred the royal wrath. He had preached repentance, but the nation rushed on to its doom. His pure passion for the welfare of his people only alienated him from them all. Is it strange that he should bewail the ills of his life? Note the words he uses to describe his isolation: "a man of contention to the whole earth!" How is he treated by men? (15. 10). What is his prayer in 15. 15-18? What ending of his struggles does he crave? What is the answer to this prayer? (verse 20). What sacrifices has Jeremiah made in loyalty to his call? (verse 18). In what way has he found Jehovah "a deceitful brook"? What has been the effect of his complaints upon his prophetic office? (verse 19). What condition is imposed upon Jeremiah that he may continue his ministry? Observe that there is no praise for past loyalty; the reward of service is more service.

Jeremiah, loyal to his call, continued to preach that it was Jehovah's purpose to deliver his people into the hands of the Babylonians. Finally he was arrested by Pashhur, chief officer of the Temple (20. 1), and put into the stocks, where he passed the night. It is not improbable that Jeremiah's complaint found in 20. 7-18 followed this indignity. Remember that Jeremiah came from a conspicuous family, that he was a man of genius, that his prophetic office entitled him to confidence and respect, that he was conscious of seeing clearly truths hidden from his contemporaries, and you will feel the hurt that Jeremiah felt at the indignities heaped upon him by Pashhur. Read 20. 14-18. Note the utter sense of failure and misery which these words convey. Upon what and whom is the curse

invoked? In the light of his misery and his failure to move Judah to repentance what is Jeremiah's meaning when he exclaims (20. 7):

*"Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded;
Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed"?*

Does he mean that Jehovah, taking advantage of his ignorance and weakness, has imposed the prophetic life upon him and so led him into wretchedness and failure? Observe that Jeremiah feels an irresistible compulsion driving him forward in his career, and that the words he utters are not his own. In verse 8 what is Jeremiah's summary of his sermons? What estimate of himself has such preaching formed in the multitude? Verse 9 may be rendered thus:

*"If I say I will not think upon his word
Nor speak any more in his name,
Then my heart burns with a consuming fire,
And I weary with restraining his commands."*

However painful the prophetic office becomes, Jeremiah cannot turn aside from his lifework. Chosen before birth, divinely appointed to preach a spiritual religion to a materialistically minded people, seeing no end of Judah's blindness but the destruction of the state, his very words put into his mouth, his rejection of his commission frustrated by a torturing fire in his heart making silence impossible, Jeremiah is driven through the loneliest struggle by the consciousness of the impelling will of Jehovah. This is Jeremiah's Gethsemane. But this conviction that he is the sent of Jehovah upholds him and gives him his sense of security in the face of utmost danger from his fellow men. Read 20. 11, 12. See also 26. 8-15.

The Isolation of His Life.—Bearing in mind Jeremiah's conception of worship, his demands for ethical relations among men, and his continued predictions that Judah must succumb to the Babylonians, one clearly sees that Jeremiah was isolated from his world. Read 11. 18-22; 15. 10, 17, 18; 16. 1-3, 5-9; 18. 18-20; 20. 10; 22.

13-19; 26. 8, 9, and state individuals and the modes of life with which Jeremiah had no fellowship. What was the cause of such isolation? Judging from the references already studied, what was the general effect of this loneliness and isolation upon Jeremiah's life? What did his personal history contribute to the development of religion?

JEREMIAH'S CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

His Attitude to Ritual and Animal Sacrifice.—Read Jeremiah 11. 1-8. Here Jeremiah appears an ardent preacher of the Deuteronomic Code. There was much in it with which Jeremiah would sympathize, but there was much, too, which he condemned. It is not improbable that at first he welcomed the code as an approximation toward spiritual religion, but when he saw that its more spiritual provisions were ignored he became aware of the futility of all legislation to reform the individual and society's institutions. Read 8. 4-9. If this section refers to the Deuteronomic Code, Jeremiah believes that the code's emphasis upon ritual falsely represents the true demands of Jehovah. Jeremiah's position is made clearer in 7. 21-23. Looking at the Temple ritual of his day, and reflecting upon the whole history of sacrifice, and measuring the religious life of which the ritual of sacrifice was an expression by the religion he had come to know in his own life, Jeremiah felt sure that sacrifice could have been no part of the original covenant at Sinai. In this view we know that he is largely correct. We have seen how large a part of Israel's forms of worship, even those approved by the Deuteronomic Code and the Book of the Covenant, is a Canaanitish borrowing. But occasional animal sacrifices are offered by nomadic peoples, and it is quite probable that animal sacrifice was performed at times of crisis and to seal the covenant at Sinai. See Exodus 18. 12; 24. 5-8. But Jeremiah's position that Jehovah does not care or no longer cares for the sacrificial system, that he now demands a more spiritual worship, is indeed a triumph of true religion.

Examine 2. 8; 9. 3-6 and observe that Jeremiah declares

that Judah does not know Jehovah. What does Jeremiah mean by knowing Jehovah? See 22. 15, 16. Observe too that Judah's ills will never cease until the people have a heart to know Jehovah (24. 7).

The New Covenant.—So Jeremiah turns from the worship of his times, which makes no great demands upon the ethical life, to insist upon that true vision of Jehovah which will transform religion from external forms into a comradeship with Jehovah expressed in love and ethical conduct. He demands in Jehovah's name not an outward sign of an ancient covenant (4. 4) but an inner cleansing of life. Purity and integrity of life are the true signs that men have entered into covenant with God. The sacrificial system (7. 21-23) obscures the character of God and is no expression of his demands. Study 29. 11-17. Observe the requirements Jehovah asks from the exiles. What conception of religion is here involved? Read 3. 16 and state Jeremiah's attitude toward the ark of the covenant. Read again 7. 3-15 and observe that the Temple is no security of the nation's life; but, on the contrary, it is to be swept away with the whole conception of worship which it represents.

Jeremiah's insistence that religion is an ethical commerce of man and God climaxes in his "new covenant." Examine attentively 31. 31-34. What was the first covenant? When was it made? Who were the contracting parties? What did the first covenant demand from the people? What did it promise on the part of Jehovah? See 7. 22, 23. What had been the history of this covenant? May it be inferred from 31. 33, 34 that in the thought of Jeremiah the characteristic marks of the old covenant were (1) that its terms were formulated in definite laws, and (2) that these laws were interpreted and enforced by religious teachers and authorities? Would Jeremiah have said that there were two fundamental defects in the old bond between Jehovah and his people—namely: (1) that its chief demand was conformity to certain definite commands, partly ethical and largely ritual, and, therefore, did not touch heartily the springs of life and conduct?

(2) and that, being national and not individual, the individual's life was not motivated sufficiently? While Jeremiah does not definitely refer to the Book of the Covenant and to the Deuteronomic Code he undoubtedly regarded these as expansions of the Sinaitic covenant and felt that the same weakness attached to them. Does Jeremiah now regard this old covenant abrogated?

Does Jeremiah regard all past achievements of religion abrogated or does he mean that the formal covenant idea cannot secure a spiritual and ethical life? The Deuteronomic Code aimed at transforming Judah's religion into a spiritual fellowship with Jehovah and into ethical relations with men. Jeremiah's contention is that no legislation, no stress of formal worship, can secure these ends; that religion is essentially a commerce between man and God; and that such fellowship cannot be codified. Commit to memory these beautiful lines, which sum up Jeremiah's conception of religion as fellowship between man and deity unmediated by priest and sacrifice:

"I will put my teaching in their breast, and I will write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

They will teach no more every man his neighbor,

And every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah;

For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest:

For I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." (Jeremiah 31. 33, 34.)

The Individual Aspect of Religion.—This very conception of spiritual religion individualized it. The student will recall that worship in the past was an affair of sacrifice, in which the family participated (1 Samuel 1. 1-8; 20. 28, 29). As long as worship was wholly expressed in ritual, the individual could scarcely think of Jehovah's having dealings with him apart from his clan. Sin and guilt also had their meaning in this solidarity of life. If the student will read the account of Achan's transgression

(Joshua 7. 16-26) or the slaughter of the priests at Nob (1 Samuel 22. 16-19) he will see how deeply rooted was the clan conception of guilt and sin. Beginnings had been made in the administration of justice (2 Kings 14. 5, 6; Deuteronomy 24. 16), in the change to individualistic responsibility, but it remained to Jeremiah to establish that the loftiest conception of religion demands an individualizing of mankind's relation to God. No doubt at times this principle has been stressed to the neglect of the social aspects of religion; but fundamentally religion at last roots in the individual soul. Read 31. 29 and state the words Jeremiah here uses to individualize guilt. Examine his prayers in 15. 15-18; 17. 14-18 and observe that in Jeremiah's life the meaning of religion has passed from nationalism to individualism. Read the psalm found in 17. 5-8. Here too it is the individual, and not the community, with whom religion is concerned.

JEREMIAH AND OURSELVES

It would be difficult to overestimate Jeremiah's services to religion. The immediate effect of his labors was small indeed. He was the loneliest of men. His conceptions of religion isolated him from his people; his patriotism, which exalted righteousness above national existence, made him obnoxious to the rulers. His life was one long martyrdom. Yet after Judah succumbed to the Babylonian, the exiles remembered his teaching and his life and they passed from despair to hope. He had shown that religion could live without the support of the state, had shown that it must live in the individual soul. He became for them the star of dawn. Jeremiah, too, set the pattern of future piety. He made possible the Psalms, which have comforted the world. Of all Old-Testament teachers he most makes us think of Christ.

Think how frequently a great soul is a lonely soul. Pass them before you: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah; how many of their contemporaries were their intimate associates? How few there are who have understood Jesus! Not one of his disciples fully entered into his

ideals. Paul did not clearly comprehend him. Few of us to-day are brave enough to live with him. We hedge at his commands; we say his ideals are impracticable; we let him live alone. Do not expect many great friendships. To possess a multitude of intimate friends in this day means that you are not living a profoundly spiritual and intellectually endowed life. Even if it narrows your intimacies, covet a great life.

Jeremiah abated no jot of his idealism to conform to the demands of a practical state. Civilization is never permanently enriched by your "practical" men. Such men live for manufacture and trade. They suppose that banks, railways, and mines are the chief factors of civilization. It is its idealism, not its business, which preserves a state. "Seek first the kingdom" is the commanding advice of life's Master.

It is a mere incident in our memory of Jeremiah that he owned a farm at Anathoth; the main thing is his piety. In the midst of a toppling state he was not overthrown with the ruined capital. His life was not identified with the Temple, palace, market, or defended walls. When these fell, there was nothing in him which they could drag down. He had learned to know Jehovah; he feared no destruction; he felt himself secure in the face of the cruellest disaster. Oh, that we might learn to find our wealth, our fame, our success, in our fellowship with God! There could be then no ruined hopes, no blasted lives, no starless despair.

In religion, as in every other department of human life, the greatest achievement is won through association. Jesus alone could not establish his kingdom. The most devoted and heroic Christian does not constitute a church. But the life that is lived together is lived primarily by individuals. The morality of a family is the morality of individuals living in the family. The religion of a church or a community is the religion of the individuals in the social group. Religion, in the last analysis, is the life of an individual. The more true, moral, and intense this life is, the more vigorous and effective is the religion of

the community. Religion is individual before it is social. Until individuals are redeemed, society is not secure. Social movements are individuals with similar interests and passions acting together. The phenomena of social action never must obscure the fact that in its final analysis life is lived by individuals.

THEMES FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The ease with which idolatrous worship reappeared in Judah after the death of Josiah indicates that the abolition of the local sanctuaries was not a popular reform. State what this change must have meant to the inhabitants of the rural towns and villages.¹

2. Jeremiah does not tell us why he did not become a priest. State the reasons that may have led him to break with the traditional employment of his fathers.

3. What considerations should determine any man in the choice of his lifework?

4. What are the defects and disadvantages of a state religion?

5. What were the essential features of the covenant between the Hebrews and Jehovah?²

6. What were the basic ideas in Jeremiah's new covenant?

7. To what extent is religion individual? social?

8. Why are great men apt to be lonely?

SELECTED READINGS

The Religion of Israel, Smith, Chapter IX.

The Prophets of Israel, Cornhill, the chapter devoted to Jeremiah.

Hebrew Religion, Addis, pages 194-206.

Article "Jeremiah," Sections I and VI, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings.

¹*Folklore in the Old Testament*, Frazier, Volume III, pages 105-7.

²*The Religion of Israel*, Ascham, Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER XII

EZEKIEL: WATCHMAN UNTO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

EZEKIEL was one of the leading citizens of Jerusalem carried captive with King Jehoiachin to Babylon in 597 B. C. These captives were settled at Tel-abib by the Kabar Canal (Ezekiel 3. 15). Ezekiel was a priest of the family of Zadok. After five years in Babylon he felt called to the prophetic ministry. From this time until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. he followed the usual course of the prophets in denouncing the sins of his people. Their sinfulness, he believed, was leading the nation to destruction. He became the interpreter of passing events to his fellow exiles. These Hebrews, who had suffered deportation in 597, kept in closest possible touch with Jerusalem and watched the course pursued by the leaders in Judah with deepest concern. It was Ezekiel's mission, like Jeremiah's, to proclaim that city and state would be destroyed. He seems to have been a leader among the exiles, was often consulted, and must have performed an important service in adjusting the exiles to their afflictions and the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.

After the city fell, in 586, Ezekiel ceased to denounce the sins of his people and became a preacher of hope. He united in himself the functions of both priest and prophet, but in his earlier sermons the prophetic outlook dominated. All the prophecies examined in this chapter were uttered between 592 and 586 B. C.

EZEKIEL'S CALL TO THE PROPHETIC OFFICE

Read Ezekiel, chapter 1. Observe that Ezekiel, as Jeremiah and Isaiah, is summoned by a vision that impresses him with the glory and majesty of Jehovah. It may not be possible to form a mental picture of these living crea-

tures, wheels, the throne, and its occupant; but the reader will mark certain of Ezekiel's dominant ideas: Jehovah is no longer enthroned in Jerusalem; he dwells upon a celestial throne, which brings him near the exiles. Note the effect of this vision upon Ezekiel. Read closely 2. 1-7. Who is the speaker in 2. 1? Observe how completely Ezekiel is directed and upheld by Jehovah. What is to be understood by the title "Son of man"? What is the characteristic feature of Israel's history? (Hereafter "Israel" will be used of the Hebrew people without reference to the divided kingdoms.) Observe that the essence of the prophetic career is in the words "thus saith Jehovah." Ezekiel is authorized and enjoined to speak with such authority. Is this conviction of being sent of Jehovah characteristic of all the prophets whom we have studied? In what way are the dangers of his mission symbolized? Observe this: his commission binds him to utterance, whether or not the people give heed to his message.

Study 2. 8 to 3. 3. In what way is Ezekiel prepared for this ministry? What were the contents of this book? How does this conception of the prophet's message compare with the sermons delivered by earlier prophets? Why was the roll sweet to Ezekiel? Read 3. 4-11. In what words does Ezekiel estimate the difficulty of his mission? the probable results? What is his conception of the character of the Hebrew state? Unto whom was he to deliver Jehovah's messages? Study 3. 12-27. Although it is not stated, we may suppose that Ezekiel in his vision places himself in Jerusalem at the time of his call; then, at the acceptance of the call, "the glory of Jehovah [rose] from his place" (verse 12) and brought him among the captives at Tel-abib. It is not unlikely that Ezekiel intends here to proclaim that Jehovah has departed from Jerusalem. What is the chief duty of a watchman to the house of Israel? Note the overwhelming sense of the prophet's responsibility. Observe that the nation is here broken up into its individual constituents: The righteous are righteous individuals, and the wicked no longer is a

guilty nation, but are wicked citizens and exiles. Note that the wicked are to have warning before punishment falls upon them. Ezekiel feels himself solemnly set apart to the awful responsibility of this task of warning. Observe especially 3. 20. What is the source of temptation? What remembrance of the righteous man's life is possible at this stage of Hebrew religion? Note (3. 23) Ezekiel's profound sense of the majesty of Jehovah. What do the words "the glory of Jehovah stood there" mean? Observe that at the very threshold of his ministry Ezekiel is restrained from an extensive public ministry. What reason is given for confining his mission to those who may visit him at his home?

THE SINS AND APPROACHING DISASTERS OF JUDAH

Jehovah's Rejection of Jerusalem.—Read Ezekiel 4. 1 to 5. 17. In what ways did Ezekiel proclaim to the first exiles that they must not expect the continuance of the Judæan state? Undoubtedly these first exiles, despite Jeremiah's warning (chapter 29), looked for a speedy return to Jerusalem. Ezekiel seeks to prepare them for the certain fate that hangs over the city. These acted sermons must have deeply impressed his auditors. What accusation is brought against Jerusalem? (5. 6, 7, 11). Has Ezekiel's residence in Babylonia revealed to him a higher morality than was to be found in Jerusalem? What is the judgment upon the guilty city? Note especially the predicted horrors of the siege (5. 10). See also Jeremiah 19. 9; Deuteronomy 28. 53; 2 Kings 6. 28. What shall become of the city's inhabitants?

The judgment upon Jerusalem is further described in 8. 1 to 11. 12. What indication is given here of Ezekiel's position among the exiles? Read closely these accounts of the heathen cults practiced in Jerusalem. After all the preaching of the prophets the nation, heedless of every attempt at spiritualizing its religion, is plunging on to its doom. What are these heathen practices? (1) The image of jealousy (8. 3)—that is, the image, or an asherah, of another deity, which provokes Jehovah to

jealousy. Observe attentively the question in 8. 6. Jehovah proposes to abandon his sanctuary at Jerusalem. This is extremely significant. It is Ezekiel's way of accounting for the destruction of Jerusalem. Jehovah himself has decreed its destruction. (2) A mystery cult consisting of the worship of animals. What representations were on the walls? Of what did the worship consist? What hint is there of its popularity? Had Israel worshiped animal forms previously? (3) The Tammuz worship. Tammuz was a Babylonian deity, whose descent into the lower world and resurrection were celebrated far and wide in the ancient world. It was at the summer solstice that Tammuz died and at the turn of the winter that he rose again. His festival was celebrated at the summer solstice by litanies of mourning. At this season the "death of vegetation and the cessation of generation is mourned."¹ (4) The sun worship. What details are given? Why does Ezekiel consider this a greater abomination than the preceding rites?

Note attentively the impressive fate of Jerusalem. Jehovah is furious at these abominations and will have no pity (8. 18). Those who defile the city are slain with the sword. Beginning at the Temple, there is no one with the mark of a mourner over the nation's sins (9. 4), and Ezekiel is left alone in the midst of the Temple strewn with the dead. From the burning city Jehovah rises in glory and departs finally from his ancient sanctuary.

The Cause of the Nation's Blindness.—It would seem that such preaching would have taken away every hope among the exiles that Jerusalem would be spared. But there were doubters enough, and Ezekiel was compelled to preach on until the city fell. Read 12. 1-20. What symbolically acted sermon is here recorded? What expression of the popular disbelief in Ezekiel's prediction is given in 12. 22? What did Ezekiel conceive to be the source of this popular skepticism? Note that the "false prophets" use the customary prophetic formula "Thus

¹ See *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, Jeremias, Volume 1, 96f., 125f.

saith Jehovah." What chance had the people of discerning the true future under such equally emphatic divided counsels? Consider the genius and the faith which separated Jeremiah and Ezekiel from this crowd of mistaken prophets. Examine Habakkuk, chapters 1 and 2. Here are expressed prophetic views of the relation of Jehovah to his people, which were denounced by Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Ezekiel's Historical Perspective.—In considering Israel's sins Ezekiel takes a position more condemnatory than any of his predecessors. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah regarded Israel's sins as a defection from Jehovah. In the earliest period there had been loyalty to him; but after entrance into Palestine the earlier worship was corrupted by Canaanitish practices. Ezekiel regards their unfaithfulness as characteristic of Hebrew life from the beginning. The whole history of Israel is a story of a rebellious people. Read chapter 16 for Ezekiel's reading of Israel's life. Note (16. 3) that in Ezekiel's opinion the nation was born from Canaanitish heathenism. He neglects or rejects all patriarchal narratives. We have seen that while the worship of the days of the judges and of the monarchy was a mingled worship of nomadic practices and the beliefs and customs of the Canaanitish agricultural communities, the people of these earlier times were not aware of any settled disloyalty to Jehovah.¹ The view of Hebrew history here presented is not a correct reading of Israel's past; the more spiritual views of a later age are supposed to have existed in the earlier period, and any departure from this loftier conception of religion is credited to the earlier times as apostasy. Examine also chapter 20. Note the disloyalty with which Israel is charged. Have we had any hint that the charge of 20. 7, 8 is true? To what extent did Egyptian beliefs and practices influence the religion of Israel? Was the conception of the Sabbath as clearly defined in the wilderness period as Ezekiel implies? Observe that

¹ *The Religion of Israel*, Ascham, Chapter XII.

in earlier references to the Sabbath it is no more sacred than the day of the new moon (Amos 8. 5; Hosea 2. 11; Isaiah 1. 13). Both seemed to have been kept by cessation from labor and by feasting at the sanctuaries, which frequently eventuated in licentiousness. The strict theistic philosophy of Ezekiel is noteworthy. Examine 20. 25, 26 and state Ezekiel's position concerning past legislation, which Israelites had accepted as divinely ordered. Read 22. 1-13, 25-29. Of what sins does Ezekiel accuse Jerusalem? What additional faults are catalogued in 18. 1-20?

EZEKIEL'S OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Read carefully 11. 13-25. Note that the inhabitants of Jerusalem think that the exiles carried to Babylon in 597, together with the exiles of the northern kingdom taken captive in 722, are far from Jehovah. What is Ezekiel's thought of this? (verse 16). What does he mean by saying Jehovah is a sanctuary for the exiles? What is Jehovah's plan for these exiles? What changes of worship will occur? In what way are the loyalty and permanence of the future state secured? Read 17. 22-24. Observe that Ezekiel here expects the Hebrew monarchy to be restored in Palestine, and that a prince of the house of David is to be king. Read 20. 39-44. You will note that Ezekiel here contemplates a return of the exiles to Palestine. What suggestion of the new order of life is given? Observe that the essence of the new state is that the people will know Jehovah. Read Ezekiel's outburst against Zedekiah in 21. 24-27 and observe the expression concerning Zedekiah's lost crown: "until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." Ezekiel fully contemplates that the returned exiles will be ruled by a Messianic prince.

EASY PATHS TO EZEKIEL

He was a prophet among the exiles in Babylonia. To clear their minds of false hopes, to awaken them to a sense

of sin and righteousness, and to show them the one possible way of return to Jerusalem was no slight ministry.

That Jehovah religion survived the nation's fall is due in large measure to Ezekiel. The Hebrews who fled to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them, play no part in the future development of Israel's religion. That the Babylonian exiles did not yield to the religion of their conquerors is due mainly to the patient, intense, and continuous ministry of Ezekiel.

He accomplished this task through the strength of a few overmastering convictions: (1) Jehovah is the absolute Sovereign not only of Israel but of the world. He has a program of righteousness. This righteousness appears in human society as justice, decency, and humanity among individuals and a nonlicentious, nonidolatrous, and unwavering worship of Jehovah. (2) Israel's history has not revealed this order of life. It has been a continuous rebellion. There is nothing left for Jehovah but to destroy the nation. The destruction of Jerusalem is a divinely ordered event. Jehovah abandons the city to the arms of Nebuchadnezzar. (3) Having left his city and land, he becomes a sanctuary for the exiles until such time as he and his people again take up residence in Palestine. He may be worshiped in Babylonia. All actual idolatry and all longing for an idolatrous worship must be put away. The Sabbaths must be rigorously kept. Sin must cease, and the individual must seek a new spirit from Jehovah. (4) When idolatry has been put away, sin ended, and the new heart received, the new state will be set up in Palestine; the exiles, refined by the awful calamities endured, will know Jehovah; and in such awareness of him the new order will be established and secured.

Ezekiel was indeed a kingdom builder. In the fullest sense he was a watchman of the house of Israel. Stern moralist, abounding in faith, reliant upon God, fearless of foes, patient under misunderstanding, he labored to keep pure religion alive in the darkest hour of Israel's life. That the labors of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah were not in vain is due very much to Ezekiel's

genius and his steadfastness to his vision of the things that ought to be.

FOR TRAVELERS TO THE BLESSED LANDS

Have you found a shining path through the darkness of great afflictions to the City of Trust and Peace? Ezekiel saw Jehovah rising in glory from the doomed city to become a sanctuary in a foreign land. The Jewish Sanhedrin handed Jesus death in a cup of God. Christ's grace in Paul was more than master of Satan's messenger, the thorn in his flesh. Tennyson discovered in the midst of his grief for Arthur Hallam "altar stairs" that "sloped through darkness up to God."

To be true and steadfast in a dark hour is not only to preserve our own soul. We are proving that the labors of a host of former seers and martyrs are not in vain. Had Ezekiel faltered, the prophetic gains of two centuries would have been lost. When any man is disloyal to his own ideals he undermines all the successes of the past.

These studies of the prophets have emphasized the tremendous worth of the individual. It was Isaiah who in 701 infused Jerusalem with the spirit of trust in Jehovah so that the city weathered the Assyrian storm. Jeremiah was the one counselor trusted, if not obeyed, in Jerusalem's darkest hour. Ezekiel made it possible for true religion to rise from Israel's national overthrow. No man dares neglect the vision of trust which God has given him. His firmness, loyalty, and faith may be the needed ministry his church and community require. There never can be a substitute for individual initiative and boldness in the cause of justice, righteousness, and love.

Let us learn from Ezekiel the supreme worth of the ideal. An invincible Jerusalem would have silenced the messages of Jeremiah. A ruined Jerusalem without an interpreter, likewise, would have crushed the kingdom of the spiritual for which Jeremiah had pleaded. Nothing but a spiritual genius could have preserved the exiles from sinking into the oblivion of the Chaldean world. This Jeremiah was.

"It takes a soul
 To move a body; it takes a high-souled man
 To move the masses to a cleaner sty;
 It takes the ideal to blow an inch inside
 The dust of the actual."

Certainly Mrs. Browning would have called Ezekiel one of the world's much-needed "high-souled" men.

What gave Ezekiel his soul? "As I was among the captives, . . . I saw visions of God." Is this not ever the experience that creates leadership in civilization? In whatever way this experience is mediated it consists essentially in an unshaken reliance upon the Invisible One, whose purposes are progressively revealed in the visible world. Such a conviction unfolds into a spiritual commerce with him. God ceases to be a definition, a controlling force, a far-off Person; he becomes a King, a Friend, a Father, whose will is lofty but lovable, whose friendship is exalted but intimate, whose fatherliness is stern but choicely companionable and comforting. He becomes personal.

Ezekiel felt a gripping responsibility for the manner of life of his neighbors. This is a mark of greatness. Nobleness ever concerns itself with meanness. Live such a life that a quiet word of correction will not antagonize your neighbor or friend who needs reproof, but, rather, will stiffen his soul against evil. Many a man drifts into a vicious life because no one at the first offense uttered the corrective and restraining word. It is the duty of everyone to be a watchman of his community. Keep your vision of God shining true and you will find many a fine chance to repress evil and encourage righteousness. To do this uncarpingly is a gift of God. The rare opportunity is ours.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What is known of the personal life of Ezekiel?
2. What does Ezekiel mean in saying that he is a watchman unto the house of Israel?
3. What sins are charged against Jerusalem by Ezekiel? Does he list any evils unmentioned by Jeremiah?

4. In what way does Ezekiel account for the destruction of Jerusalem?
5. What constitutes the teaching of the false prophets?
6. What is Ezekiel's view of Hebrew history? To what extent is he correct?
7. What is Ezekiel's view of the origin of those features of the sacrificial system which he condemns?
8. What new emphasis was given to the Sabbath? Why?
9. What was Ezekiel's expectation concerning the future of Judah?

HELPS FOR THE MASTERY OF EZEKIEL

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CHAPTER XIII

IN THE WAKE OF THE EXILES

PRECEDING chapters have traced the religion of Judah from the division of the kingdoms to the capture and sack of Jerusalem 586 B. C. The devastation of the city by a foreign power was the most tragical experience through which the Hebrew people had passed, and it could not be other than a turning point of much moment in their life. It was the final blow that scattered the Jews far and wide from the land that had come to be regarded passionately as their own; an exile that, for the vast majority of the race, continues to this day. It was during the exilic years immediately following the fall of Jerusalem, while the city was still in ruins, that Judaism—the religious beliefs and practices of the Jews against which Christianity was a reaction—took its rise. The present chapter exhibits something of the life of those first exilic years, the effect upon them of the fall of Jerusalem, and their religious life under the changed conditions.

THE FORTUNES OF THE JEWS IN EGYPT

Read 2 Kings 25. 26 and Jeremiah 43 for the withdrawal into Egypt of the Jews who had slain Gedaliah, together with others who feared the vengeance of Babylon. The language in Jeremiah 43. 6 intimates that Jeremiah was carried forcibly with these exiles. The lesson of Jerusalem's destruction was lost upon these refugees. Jerusalem had fallen because of its idolatry (44. 5, 6), but the exiles, untaught by this calamity, continued to practice these foreign rites (44. 7, 15-19). What were these practices? What was the popular explanation of their calamities? Does this attitude of these Egyptian exiles explain their apparent failure to contribute to the future development of Israel's religion?

What future does Jeremiah promise his obdurate countrymen (44. 26-28)? Excavations in recent years indicate that the Jews in Egypt, instead of being destroyed, continued to increase in numbers. One of these Jewish settlements was on the island of Elephantine, near the present Assuan. They formed a prosperous community in the midst of their Egyptian neighbors, had their temple to Jehovah, their own law courts, and practiced their own customs. As we shall see in later chapters, the Jews in Egypt continued to multiply until they far outnumbered their brethren in Palestine. They seem, however, to have had little direct influence upon the rise and development of Judaism.

JERUSALEM AND JUDAH DURING THE EXILE

Whatever may have been the number of the Jews who fled into Egypt and were carried into Babylonia, a large majority were left in the villages and dismantled towns of Judah. Those who remained in the land were for the most part the poorer peasantry (2 Kings 25. 12), and these humble inhabitants easily mingled with the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Philistines who pressed into the desolated country. In the course of years intermarriages occurred, and the worship of Jehovah, which lingered for a time, became more and more degenerate, until it was repudiated by the returning exiles. Jerusalem itself was left desolate (2 Kings 25. 9-11). The destruction was intended by the Babylonians to render the place uninhabitable. The Temple, palaces, and walls were thrown down, and the city, as much of it as was possible, was burned.

Yet the ruined city, at least for a time, continued to be regarded by the Jews as their holy city. Worshipers took their mournful way to the sacred site to offer their sacrifices (Jeremiah 41. 5). Doubtless there were priests who directed and encouraged this worship. Ezekiel (33. 23-29) expresses his conviction that the Jews left in Palestine, although they outnumber the exiles, cannot again build up Jewish civilization. They worship idols, commit

acts of violence, do not observe the ceremonial laws in the killing of animals, and make unlawful marriages. Ezekiel expects that these Jews will be utterly extinguished. Jeremiah's assertion that the land is without inhabitants (44. 22) does not correspond to the probable and known facts. Both prophets, however, expected little from those who were living in the desolate villages and towns, which were infected with the same abominations that had provoked the destruction of the city. Little could be expected from those who dwelt in "strongholds and caves."

THE EXILES IN BABYLONIA

The true succession of Israel's history and religion rests with the Babylonian exiles. But the course of higher religion advanced against heavy odds. There was little oppression of the exiles. As in Egypt, they lived in their own self-governing communities. There were opportunities of agriculture and trade, and wealth multiplied. Added to these physical inducements to forget their past home, the belief was prevalent that Jehovah had forsaken his land and retired to some distant northern throne (Isaiah 14. 13; Ezekiel 1. 4). Many of the exiles, considering the fate of Samaria, must have given up hope of a return to Palestine. It was the task of the clearer-visioned to encourage their countrymen to interpret the past calamities and to awaken hope of a restoration to the land of their fathers.

Depression and Despair of the Exiles.—Lamentations, chapters 2 and 4, were written by one of the Babylonian exiles in the years immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem. Read 2. 1-10. Note the desolation that has befallen Jerusalem: "A cloud" covers "the daughter of Zion," "the beauty of Israel" is "cast down," her palaces are "swallowed up," the city's gates are sunk in the ground, the Temple is destroyed. Observe in these and in similar expressions the writer's passion for the city and Temple. Have we met this love for Jerusalem and the sanctuary in any previous study? Who is the author of this calamity? Observe the respect for the king. What is the

effect of this catastrophe upon the exiles? (2. 6, 9, 10). Observe especially what is said in 2. 10 about the prophets. These are the "false prophets" of whom we have studied in earlier lessons. Why are they now visionless? What has occasioned this terrible blow from Jehovah? Consider here 2. 14 and reflect whether the writer was not one of those who, before the city fell, believed in the attitude and message not of Jeremiah but of the "false prophets." This song reflects the transition from the old popular conception of the relation of Jehovah and Israel to the ideals of the great prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who declare this relation to be ethical, and, therefore, that nothing but righteousness on the part of the people would insure its continuance. It was this view that Jehovah himself "swallowed up Israel," not the nation's conquerors, which saved ethical religion from perishing from the earth.

Lamentations 4 pursues the same theme. There are striking touches of the horror of the siege and sack of Jerusalem. Does the author specify the sins that have provoked Jehovah to punish the state? What makes the writer so sure of his statement in 4. 22 concerning the Hebrew exiles? Examine closely these two dirges and consider the author's expectation of Israel's restoration to Palestine.

The author of Psalm 137 probably witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and was carried to Babylon in 586. Note here, too, the affection for Jerusalem, even in her ruins; the feeling that Jehovah cannot be worshiped in Babylonia; and the hope of punishment for their conquerors. Would you say this Psalm breathes the despair of a hopeless exile? There are, perhaps, other Psalms springing from the drear experiences of the Exile, but the historical background of these songs of piety is usually so dimly sketched that they cannot be used confidently for this period.

Ezekiel's Prediction of a Judgment of Nations.—Ezekiel at no time experienced the hopelessness of the writers of these dirges. He believed in a restoration to Palestine.

He believed that the first step in Jehovah's program of restoration would be the punishment of the nation that had contributed to or rejoiced at Jerusalem's downfall. There is not space enough to study Ezekiel's denunciation of these nations, but the earnest student will wish to read them.

(a) *Ammon (25. 1-7); Moab (25. 8-11); Edom (25. 12-14); Philistines (25. 15-17)*.—These peoples are to be devastated because they have exulted and, in the case of Edom, assisted at the downfall of Judah. The defenseless condition of Judah was Edom's opportunity to revenge itself against the Hebrew. The more fertile territory of Judah attracted the Edomites, and after the fall of Jerusalem they pressed into southern Palestine, seized the land, and harried the people. Ezekiel 35 is a second doom pronounced by the prophet against this nation. In 35. 10 Ezekiel claims that the devastated country is still Jehovah's country and under his immediate care.

(b) *Tyre and Sidon (26-28)*.—Tyre is to be utterly destroyed because it rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem. The student should read at least 26. 3-6. (The daughters of Tyre in verse 6 are the city's outlying villages.) Read especially 28. 25, 26 for the definite statement that judgment first must fall upon all those nations which have done Israel despite before Jehovah will return the people to their and his land.

(c) *Egypt (Ezekiel 29)*.—What is the sin of Egypt? (29. 3, 6, 9). Observe that the punishment of Egypt is exile (29. 12), and that, although a restoration is promised (29. 13), the nation henceforth will play a commonplace role. A little more than sixteen years lie between 29. 1-6 and 29. 17-21. Note the latter section, in which Ezekiel acknowledges that his prediction of the destruction of Tyre was not fulfilled. However, he stills clings to his belief in the destruction of Egypt; but subsequent history did not carry out Ezekiel's expectations.

Ezekiel Promises a Return of the Exiles to Jerusalem.—Jehovah indeed had destroyed Jerusalem, but he purposed likewise to restore his scattered people to their land.

(a) *Ezekiel 34.*—Greedy shepherds—that is, princes, priests, and prophets—have slain and scattered the flock, Israel. Jehovah, the Good Shepherd, will gather the sheep from distant hill and mountain and bring them again to their pasturages in Palestine. Observe especially 34. 23-31. What very important details of the restored nation are given?

(b) *Ezekiel 36 is a magnificent prophecy of restoration.* Observe especially 36. 16-21, stating that Judah's calamities are well deserved, and 36. 22-32, which declares that the return to Palestine is determined, but not because of the people's merits. What motive moves Jehovah to this restoration? What assurance is given that the people hereafter will be able to merit this mercy of Jehovah? Observe that Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, sees that the springs of genuine ethical religion are in the soul of man. Note that, after the restoration and the enjoyment of the new blessings, a new vision of their iniquitous past will insure their loyalty to Jehovah (36. 31). An experience of Jehovah's mercy will deepen the consciousness of sin.

(c) *Ezekiel 37.*—A prophecy of the resurrection of the nation. Again Ezekiel seeks to awaken the hopes of his fellow exiles. He concedes that the nation is dead in the scattered sons of Israel. But Jehovah is not limited by such disaster. Dry bones can be brought to life when he wills. Observe (verse 11) that these dead are not individuals in their graves, but the symbol of the hopelessness of the living exiles. The graves of verses 12, 13 are likewise a similar figure of speech. Note also that Ezekiel expects the exiles of the northern kingdom to share in this restoration. Ezekiel must have known of descendants of the Samaritan exiles, who might share in the return. The scattered peoples of both kingdoms are to be united into one nation. What details of the new kingdom are given in verses 24-28?

The Destruction of the Babylonians Predicted.—Read Isaiah, chapters 13 and 14. Ezekiel appears never to have predicted the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire; and as time passed, the hopes he had awakened were mingled with

gloom. It became evident that the Babylonian policy contemplated no rebuilding of the Hebrew state. At the same time there was evidently a growing weakness in the Babylonian kingdom. These two facts stimulated the prophets to predict the downfall of Babylonia as a necessary prelude of the restoration of the Hebrew nation.

Babylon was captured by the Persians under Cyrus in 538 B. C. These chapters apparently are from an unknown prophet a few years before the capture of Babylon. Observe that Jehovah is marshaling an army not of Jews but of aliens to devastate Babylon (13. 2-5). These alien hosts are his "consecrated ones." They are assembling in the mountains, and their hosts, marching upon Babylon, will strike consternation and dismay into the proud Babylonians, who have devastated Jehovah's city and carried his people captive. The mountains are the land of Media, from conquering which Cyrus led his armies into Babylonia. The day of Jehovah (13. 9-22) is a time of dire and overwhelming judgment upon Babylonia. These "sinners" of Babylon are so wicked that the whole world must suffer for their iniquity.

*"I will make the heavens to tremble,
And the earth shall be shaken out of its place."
(13. 13.)*

Here we meet the beginnings of the apocalyptic literature which figures so largely in later Messianic prophecies. Notice the fierce cruelty that the prophet believes the Babylonians will suffer: men thrust through by the sword, children dashed in pieces, and women ravished. The permanent desolation of the city is assured. It shall be the abode of satyrs, wolves, and jackals. Cyrus, contrary to this prophet's expectation, seems to have treated Babylon with unusual consideration. The city was not destroyed, and the inhabitants were not dealt with harshly.

Isaiah 14. 9-23 possesses exceeding interest. It is one of the earliest references in the Old-Testament literature to life after death. Human beings who die pass into an underworld deep below the surface of the earth where

they have acted their noble or unworthy parts. The descent of the Babylonian king, the great oppressor of nations, as this prophet regards him, stirs the whole underworld into excitement. His fellow kings of the past remind him of his weakness and rejoice at his humiliation. They assure him that nothing less than "the uttermost parts of the pit" await him who would not "loose his prisoners to their home" (14. 17). They reproach him, too, that his body has not had honorable burial (14. 19).

With this description of the underworld should be compared Ezekiel's judgment of the nations (32. 18-32), in which the dead of various nations are grouped together in Hades. The more culpable nations, from Ezekiel's point of view, occupy the lower depths of the underworld. In both these passages there is no conception of individual immortality with moral awards according to life on earth. The immortality is group immortality, and life after death is conceived for all in gloomy terms.

SUMMARY

The wonder grows that the destruction of Jerusalem did not silence the worship of Jehovah and end the rise of ethical religion in the world. This lesson sets before us the critical situation of the kingdom of God at this period of the world's history. Palestine, though not stripped of Hebrews, ceased to develop the religion of the fathers. The contribution to the world's civilization of those who remained in the land was slight indeed. Those who fled into Egypt, though they continued to worship Jehovah and multiplied in numbers, appear to have exercised no influence at least for several generations upon the development of Judaism. It remained for those in Babylon to cherish the achievements of the past, to reflect upon the meaning of their calamities, to hold steadfastly to their faith in Jehovah, and to follow the gleam that he flashed into their expectant souls.

We have seen in Psalm 137 and in the two dirges from Lamentations that the exiles generally, under the instruction of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, recognized that the destruc-

tion of Jerusalem was a judgment upon Israel's sins. But the catastrophe was so overwhelming, and the exultation of the nations so pronounced that there was no hope of deliverance and restoration. Then there arose a series of prophets whose services to ethical religion are inestimable. They kept alive the faith of their countrymen in Jehovah as the one true God. He had not been discredited but exalted in the destruction of Israel. His program for the future is a new Israel exalted above her enemies and rising loftily over her own checkered history. This is the service Ezekiel rendered the world. After him at least three unknown prophets, one of whom is the author of Isaiah 13 and 14, and two others, to be considered in the next chapter, continued this ministry of faith and hope.

STAIRWAYS TO HIGHER CIVILIZATION

No hour is dark enough to put out the torch of hope. There is no need that hope ever should be extinguished utterly in any man. Again and again evil ascends the throne of an age, a nation, a man's own soul; but as long as man feels that evil is a tyrant and usurper, the dawn trembles to light the world.

The civilization of our dreams—the day of justice and righteousness and love among men—can neither come nor abide until man's "stony heart" gives way to a "heart of flesh." This heart of flesh—this inner life of the soul—is the spring of all programs of human welfare. Until man loves supremely and wisely, all sagely devised institutions are in vain. Man's inner life never will be illumined to see the larger welfare and never will be strengthened to strive for it and maintain it until he works in fellowship with God. There is no social welfare apart from religion.

The dreamer is the builder of civilization. The man who sees clearly the church and state that ought to be alone knows the immediate practical thing to do. Many a Christian and many a church stagnates to-day because there is no commanding program. If you would make your life buoyant and significant, decide what you would

like to be or ought to be in ten or twenty years from to-day. If you would have your church a vital factor in your community, determine what your church ought to be accomplishing in the next half century to maintain its intellectual, social, and moral leadership of the community. See the distant scene, and the path of the hour is illumined.

Remember that it is sheer optimism that saves the world. Ezekiel simply would not consider defeat. Jesus in no wise considered that crucifixion spoiled his plans. Huss saw the fires of a world reformation in the flames that burned his body into ashes. He who exclaims, "What's the use?" is a cumberer of the earth. Optimism will outlaw intoxicating drinks the world round, will give woman her long-delayed economic and civil rights, will toll the death of war, will reorganize righteously the economic life of the world. Do not forget that God has a program; he is not being defeated by the foolish rebellion of men. Trust and obey him, and the better days will the sooner dawn.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why was the destruction of Jerusalem a turning point in Hebrew religion?
2. What made these years of Jewish exile such a critical period in the world's civilization?
3. Did the destruction of Jerusalem advance the cause of religion?
4. What would have been the probable course of Hebrew religious life had the integrity of the state been preserved?
5. Why were the Jews who fled to Egypt so slightly influential in the further development of Hebrew religion?
6. What conditions during the exilic period were unfavorable to the maintenance of the worship of Jehovah among the Palestinian Jews?
7. Since the rise of prophetism was essential to the continuance and development of Hebrew religion in the exilic period, what conditions in Babylonia favored the appearance of those prophets who became the saviors of religion?
8. Why did the Jews, neither in Egypt nor in Palestine, produce prophets?
9. To what does the author of Lamentations (chapters 2 and 4) attribute the downfall of Jerusalem?

10. According to Ezekiel what is the first act of the drama of the restoration of the Jewish state?

11. What political organization does Ezekiel conceive necessary for the new state?

12. To what extent is Ezekiel's conception of Sheol borrowed from or influenced by Babylonian ideas?

13. To what extent does this study of the exile impress you with belief in the supreme watch and guidance of God in the affairs of men?

WORKS OF REFERENCE

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CHAPTER XIV

TWO NAMELESS KINGDOM BUILDERS

THE armies of Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean king of Babylon, had plundered and destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B. C. At his death in 562 his son Amil-Marduk (Evil-merodach; 2 Kings 25. 27) ascended the throne. The Biblical statement (2 Kings 25. 27-30) that he liberated Jehoiachin and provided royally for the dethroned king is all that is known of this monarch's reign. Amil-Marduk was assassinated, and his brother-in-law Nergal-sharezer ascended the throne. The latter king, following the policy of Nebuchadnezzar, checked the hope that the liberation of Jehoiachin awakened among the exiles. In 556 Nergal-sharezer died, and after a few months' rule by his son the Chaldean house ended in this youth's assassination. Nabonidus, a Babylonian, then ruled the destiny of the empire. This king was a great restorer and builder of temples and seems to have neglected other public affairs. But it was a reign of peace and prosperity. During this period the Persians, under Cyrus, arose against the Medes and won the territory that once composed a large part of the Assyrian Empire. Nabonidus paid no heed to this rising power; and when Cyrus approached Babylon in 538, the city fell into his hands without resistance.

Ezekiel's ministry belongs to the earlier part of the period sketched above. Since he uttered no predictions of the downfall of the Chaldean Empire, it is most probable that he did not live beyond the hopes of restoration awakened by the liberation of Jehoiachin. From Ezekiel's death until the ascendancy of the Persians became apparent, there was nothing to encourage belief in a return to Palestine. Undoubtedly this was a despondent generation. If Israel was not to return to Palestine, then Jehovah's purposes were thwarted, Ezekiel and Jere-

miah were mistaken, and there was little use in clinging to their oft-deferred hope and the religious customs of their fathers: they might as well succumb to the inevitable destiny and mingle in the civil and religious life of the Babylonians.

In this dark hour arose the grandest of Israel's seers. Even should there be no return to Jerusalem, Jehovah was still with them and had in them and for them a glorious destiny. Their mission to the world was such that nothing less than this prolonged and hopeless captivity could accomplish it. Those who remained faithful and loyal to Jehovah through their very sufferings and faith, and through these alone, could bear that witness to the alien world which would win their allegiance to Jehovah and accomplish their salvation.

THE GREAT EVANGELIST OF THE EXILE

His message is preserved in four oracles embedded in Isaiah 40 to 55. These present a portrait of the "servant of Jehovah" and his mission.

(a) *Isaiah 42. 1-4.*—Observe that somebody is Jehovah's servant, in whom he delights, and in whom is his Spirit. What is the mission of this servant? (verse 1). (The word "justice" used here really means the whole of the beliefs and ordinances of Israel's religion.) Notice the method of this vast undertaking to evangelize the heathen world (verse 2). This evangelist is not to conduct a series of whirlwind tabernacle campaigns; it is a quiet, unobtrusive, intensive, individual propaganda which is here contemplated. Verse 3 indicates that there are elements of faith and goodness even in the midst of the idolatry and superstition of the heathen world, and that these are to be strengthened and fanned into flame, not destroyed by bigotry and egotism. Gentleness and conciliation, not harsh reproaches and stern denunciation, will commend the religion of Jehovah. Verse 4 declares the indefatigable zeal of the servant in the pursuit of his mission, which shall not end until the most distant lands have accepted Jehovah's true religion.

(b) *Isaiah 49. 1-6* is the second of these servant songs. Who is the speaker? Who the audience? Note the conviction of the servant that he is called to his mission by Jehovah from his earliest existence. What prophet held a similar belief? How is the servant's effectiveness of speech here symbolized? What words declare the certainty of success for the servant's mission to the Gentile world? What is the servant's own opinion concerning the success of his mission? Yet observe that he recognizes that the issue is with Jehovah. Verses 5 and 6 may be rendered as follows:

*“And now is Jehovah minded
 (Who formed me from the womb to be his servant)
 To bring Jacob back again
 And gather Israel unto him;
 And to me, honored in Jehovah's eyes,
 And strength receiving from my God,
 He saith, 'Slight task it is to establish Jacob's tribes
 And bring back the preserved of Israel;
 Rather shall you be a light unto the Gentiles
 And my salvation be unto all the earth.'”*

The student must be impressed by the splendid greatness of this sentiment. Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerned themselves with the restoration of Israel to Palestine; this servant of Jehovah accepts the teaching of these older prophets that it is Jehovah's purpose to restore exiled Israel to its ancient land. But there is a higher task for the servant of Jehovah than to labor for this restoration. Jehovah himself will perform this in his own good time. He now commits to his servant a far grander enterprise. He is to be Jehovah's light in the midst of vast Gentile darkness; he is to become Jehovah's messenger of the true religion which is the world's salvation.

(c) *Isaiah 50. 4-9*.—This is the third song of the servant of Jehovah. Who is the speaker? Does he have an auditory or is he soliloquizing? Verse 4 expresses the servant's preparation to become the teacher of the heathen world weary with its idolatry. Verse 5 states the servant's

unquestioned obedience to the divine will, and verse 6 describes his willing submission to the insults and suffering inflicted by a misunderstanding heathendom. Yet he was sustained (verses 7-9) by a sublime consciousness of the presence of Him who had called and commissioned him.

(d) *These servant songs climax in the well-known passage Isaiah 52. 13 to 53. 12.*—Here we reach the heights of Hebrew prophecy.

(1) *52. 13-15.*—Who is the speaker? Who are the hearers? What prediction is made of the servant's renown and destiny? Verses 14, 15 may be thus paraphrased: The servant's marred and deformed appearance was little calculated to commend him to the Gentiles, but his sublime mission makes him the surprise of the nations. Kings shall be awed in his presence, for they shall now perceive things which hitherto they never may have seen or heard.

(2) *53. 1-10.*—Who is now the speaker? The opening question of verse 1 should be, as the marginal reading suggests, "Who could have believed what we have heard?" Jehovah's servant grew up in the presence of the Gentile nations, but there was no attractiveness in him for their eyes. What further statement (in verse 4) is made of the way in which he was regarded by the heathen world? Verse 4 is thus translated in "The New Century Bible":

*"Yet our diseases 'twas he who bore,
And our sufferings, he bore their load;
While we, we thought him plague-stricken,
Smitten of God, and humiliated."*

What further words describe the vicarious suffering of Jehovah's servant? Observe the gentle, uncomplaining spirit (verse 7) in which this persecuted servant bore his afflictions unto death. The text of verses 8, 9 is not clear; the following probably expresses the meaning:

*"By high-handed oppression was he stricken down.
Who among his people regarded his death?
Yet for their transgressions was he smitten.
His grave was made among the sinful and wealthy,
Although he was guiltless of violence and deceit."*

Verse 10, also confused, may be expressed thus :

*“It was Jehovah’s will to crush him
And to make him an offering for sin;
Yet his life shall not end, he shall behold posterity,
And the purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.”*

(3) 53. 11, 12.—The speaker now changes. Who is he? The text here too is uncertain. The following is perhaps the general sense :

*“Through the travail of his soul shall he see the light sat-
isfying;
By his knowledge shall my servant bring many to right-
eousness;
The burden of their iniquities shall he bear.
Therefore, shall he receive his portion among the great
And have his share of spoil with the strong,
Because he poured out his soul unto death
And let himself be reckoned a transgressor.
Yet it was the punishment of the many which he bore
And for transgressors that he interposed.”*

THE SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH

The heights of ethical religion are reached in the servant songs of the older of these two unknown prophets living in the latter half of the Babylonian exile. It is imperative to determine who is to be understood by “the servant of Jehovah.” Many Christian writers have thought these utterances were a prediction of the life and work of Jesus. That this interpretation does not do these writings justice is evident from any consideration of the meaning of Hebrew prophecy. Those great men who lifted Hebrew worship into ethical monotheism were not concerned about the precise details of far-off events. Distant scenes were not their concern. They were the interpreters of current events to their own generation. It would not have been of supreme inspiration to the Babylonian exiles to have brought to them a foretelling of the life of Jesus, who was not to be born for more than five hundred years. Nothing

less than a counsel or a hope for immediate use would avail. This servant, now proclaimed to them, must be one in their own times or he could not be of immediate help to them.

Since there has been preserved the name of no individual of the Exile who in any measure could have warranted such an ideal eulogy or achieved such a heroic service, we must dismiss the thought that this servant of Jehovah is an individual. The Second Isaiah's polemic against idols and his thrilling summons to his people to shake off the notion of Jehovah's impotence and indifference reveal the danger to which Israel was subjected in foreign lands. Undoubtedly thousands of Jews, discouraged by repeatedly blasted hopes, must have drifted into conformity with the religious and political practices around them. But there were others, hoping in the midst of despair and meditating upon the nation's past, who were molded into a true Israel in the midst of heathenism.

This true Israel, misunderstood and persecuted by their conquerors and adversely judged by those Jews who had conformed to Babylonian life, is Jehovah's servant. It is this group of exiles to whom this author speaks. He wished them to understand their own high mission in the world. Theirs was a vicarious suffering. The afflictions they bore were not penal alone. There rested upon them the grossness of religious beliefs and practices of the whole world. They were the teachers and the atoners of mankind. Religion at its loftiest is to put aside one's immediate glory and destiny and, suffering the afflictions that selfishness ever thrusts upon altruism, to go forth even unto death and proclaim in heroic deed the sublime satisfaction won in loyalty to one's ideal. Israel's mission was not to found a state but to convert a world to the holy and righteous God, whom the prophets from Amos to Ezekiel had proclaimed; it was to sweep away from the nations the gross idolatry, the senseless ritual of divination, sorcery, and sacrifice, and to fill human life with glad acceptance of an ethical and spiritual Deity's will.

Everyone who grasps this thinker's dream of missionary service will be thrilled by its grandeur. It is little wonder that his contemporaries could not follow him, and that, later, Judaism found no place for his universalism. It may be truthfully though regretfully said that to have carried any considerable proportion of his countrymen with him would have been disastrous. His age was not yet ready for such a conception of religion and life. Jesus of Nazareth, who sought to make this ideal the basis of his kingdom, was put to death. His teaching, still too lofty for the world, was distorted by his followers. Nor is our age truly ripe for this dream. Yet civilization will not shine with its fullest splendor until some great nation deliberately sacrifices itself for truth, righteousness, and peace. Bigotry, egotism, greed, reliance upon physical strength, and longing for material goals are the curse of modern nations. Let some great nation arise in the spirit of this nameless evangelist and sacrifice all for the sake of the brotherhood to be, and the world then, and not until then, will be the kingdom of the Christ.

DEUTERO-ISAIAH

The fortieth to the fifty-fifth chapters of Isaiah, with the exception of the sections studied above, usually are assigned to another nameless prophet of the Babylonian exile, who, for want of a better name, is called Deutero-, or Second, Isaiah. These prophecies were probably composed between 546 and 538 B. C. Their author included in his book these servant passages, the work of an earlier prophet. The mission of this prophet was to quicken among his people the hopes of a speedy deliverance from exile and a return to Jerusalem. How did he undertake this task?

(a) *Deliverance from exile and restoration to Palestine is at hand.* Examine Isaiah 40. 1, 2; 51. 5, 12-14; 52. 7-12 and observe the need of such a message to relieve the despondency of the exiles. How speedily does this prophet expect the Exile to end? There is a short song (48. 20, 21) that, when rendered properly into English, conveys

the spirit of urgency and expectancy characteristic of this prophet. Verse 20 may be rendered thus:

*“Go forth from Babylon,
 Flee from the Chaldees;
 With loud song proclaim it,
 These tidings make known,
 Send it forth
 To the end of the earth:
 Say, ‘Yahweh hath ransomed
 Jacob his slave.’”*¹

(b) *Nearly a generation had passed since Ezekiel had aroused their hopes of release, but the restoration was as far off as ever.* What assurance could be offered that this new prophet, like Ezekiel, was not mistaken? This Second Isaiah urged upon his despondent, questioning countrymen these considerations:

(1) *The might and wisdom of Jehovah.*—Read 40. 12-17, 22, 26, 28; 42. 5, 13-17; 44. 6; 45. 9-13; 46. 13; 52. 9. Observe the claims that are made for Israel’s God. To what extent would such beliefs be difficult for these exiles? When once accepted, what bearing would they have upon their religious practices? upon their hopes of return to Jerusalem?

(2) *The righteousness and holiness of Jehovah and his love for Israel.*—Read 41. 1-20 and observe the gracious words in which doubting Israel is assured of Jehovah’s love and yearning to deliver his people from their distresses. Israel is Jehovah’s people; even in exile he has not cast them away. See, similarly, 43. 1-13; 44. 1-8; 49. 14-26. Jehovah’s very holiness and righteousness impel him to fulfill his ancient purpose to magnify his people Israel.

(a) *Granting these truths, the prophet’s auditors yet would ask him how these things were to come to pass.* The gods of the Chaldeans had shown their power over Israel’s God in the sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and in

¹“The New Century Bible.”

this prolonged captivity. There was no hint of liberation in the Chaldean policy. To this the prophet answered:

(1) *The gods of the Chaldeans, of the entire non-Jewish world, are powerless in the presence of the one true God, Jehovah.* Read 40. 19-26; 46. 8-10 and many similar utterances in this prophet's oracles for his repeated and varied affirmations that Jehovah alone is Master of the nations. Note the proof offered of this superiority of Jehovah in 41. 21-24. The Chaldean gods, not seeing the approaching fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus, have uttered no warning. Jehovah alone sees the coming doom of the Chaldean Empire. Let the Chaldean gods show their might by their foresight. Their very silence in this crisis proves their impotence. Let Israel not fear them, but trust Jehovah and be filled with courage and hope.

(2) *The Chaldean Empire is doomed (43. 14; 47. 1-15; 49. 24-26).* The nations are in the hand of Jehovah (40. 15).

(3) *The people, deceived by the peace and prosperity of the Chaldean Empire under Nabonidus, did not conceive this destruction possible.* Our prophet points to the rising power of Persia under Cyrus and declares that he is Jehovah's anointed to break the power of Chaldea and to liberate the Jews from Babylon. Read 41. 2, 3, 5; 44. 28; 45. 1-6; 45. 13; 46. 11; 48. 14, 15. State what is said about the successes of Cyrus, the relation of his victories to Jehovah's purposes, his attitude to the exiled Jews, and his services in their behalf.

(d) *Some of the prophet's auditors, remembering the teaching of other prophets that the Exile was their punishment for sin, must have pointed out that they dared not hope for such high favor from Jehovah.* Read 40. 2; 43. 22-28; 44. 21, 22; 54. 1-10 for the prophet's answer. Does he palliate his nation's sins? Does he preach that the Exile has been a punishment for sin? Does he think that Jehovah is indifferent to sin? Why, then, does he assure his countrymen of liberation?

(e) *The future state.*—Read 42. 6-8; 43. 3-8; 44. 5, 26-28; 45. 13, 14; 49. 22, 23; 54. 11-14; 55. 5. What is

the future mission of Israel? What is to be the nation's attitude to the Gentiles? Does the author expect a complete restoration of Jews to Palestine? What details are given of the expected life in Palestine?

In turning from the prophet of the servant passages to Deutero-Isaiah one feels that he has dropped from the heights. Yet somehow, in this practical world, an ideal if too splendid does not grip mankind. It takes the ideal to move the actual, but it is usually the modified dream of a great thinker which a statesman undertakes to write into laws and embody in institutions. The Second Isaiah was no mere drudge. He too was moved by glittering visions of the ought-to-be. But he realized clearly that scattered exiles must be gathered again into a state in order that Jehovah religion should continue in the world. He too regarded Israel as the servant of Jehovah, but the mission was in Palestine and not among the nations. It required a state, and not a church, at this period of civilization to carry forward the torch of religious progress. The man who can put foundations under his air castles is ever needed by the world.

SUMMARY

In these two nameless prophets of the Exile we have two widely divergent views of Israel's future. The author of the servant songs does not emphasize a return to Palestine. It is not there that Israel is to fulfill her mission. It is not as a state but as a missionary that the Jewish people henceforth are to follow their destiny. Her sufferings no longer are penal but vicarious. By patience, faith in Jehovah, loyal acceptance of his will, and unwearied proclamation of his righteousness, the exiles are to win the heathen world to him. For this purpose the nation has died and in the undertaking of this universal evangelism the nation will rise again into a new and undreamed glory.

The second prophet puts this high and difficult mission aside. Israel is to go back to Palestine. This marvelous deliverance of his people from the apparently certain de-

struction in a foreign land will draw the attention of the nations to Jehovah's grandeur, wisdom, and sovereignty. Nations that Israel has never known will come submissively to Jerusalem to learn the ordinances of Israel's God.

FOR THE QUIET HOUR

What a hollow thing is fame beside the rendering of great service! The author of the noblest utterance of the non-Christian world is unknown. His message of evangelism made little appeal to his dejected fellow exiles. His soul was too big for them. The light that gleamed so gloriously in him was too distant a star to light him into earthly immortality. His name, uncherished of men, is hid with God.

Must not every great religious experience seek to utter its message to others? Can genuine religion be other than missionary and evangelistic? You can measure your religion not by your honesty, church attendance, or the correctness of your creed, but by your passion to infuse the spirit of your knowledge of God into individuals and institutions far and near.

Do you realize the far vicariousness of human life? Are you an employer of labor? Do you recognize how much of your success is due to the men who work for you? Do you give them a just share of the profit of your common toil? You who are employees, do you bear in mind that your employers have taken from you some of the burdens that you otherwise would carry? Life everywhere is an intricately woven web. Let us try not to harden ourselves against others but to understand how much we must bear one another's burdens in an ideal civilization.

Ideals, unless they are embodied in deeds and institutions, are no more than dreams which mock us in our sleep. Deutero-Isaiah, although he missed the fine lift of soul of this earlier seer, realized that the state is essential to an ordered civilization. He set himself to create out of his despondent countrymen a new social order to be realized in Palestine. His passion ever must be our

teacher. Do not suppose that your prayer for righteousness will avail unless you set yourself like flint against evil. Be a dreamer but be a fighter too. Smash the saloon, strike militarism till it dies, cry out against our present social order of economic injustice until ruthless competition and unjust division of the profits of toil are replaced by Christian brotherhood; count greed a snake and scotch it pitilessly; push civic cutthroats to the wall; give woman the suffrage and rescue her from the brute passions of lust. Be a builder of the ideal state. Take great views of God and help to regenerate the world.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Consider briefly the mission of the great prophets. To what extent were they interested in far-off events? In general, when they discussed the future, what motive led them to forecast the course of events? What events did they predict? To what extent were their predictions fulfilled? What was the great motive that impelled them in their ministry?

2. What political events suggested to the author of the servant passages the need of such sermons? Whom was this prophet seeking to serve by these messages?

3. Who is the servant of Jehovah? What new conception of religion is here proclaimed?

4. What influence had this idea upon the world's religious life?

5. What contribution does this author make to the problem of human suffering?

6. State the various arguments offered by the Deutero-Isaiah to overcome the despondency of the Babylonian exiles.

REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

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Isaiah and His Times, Driver, pages 175-84.

CHAPTER XV

TASKS AND HOPES OF THE RETURNING EXILES

BABYLON fell into the hands of Cyrus in 538 B. C. His first acts did not disappoint the hopes of the Deutero-Isaiah. In the British Museum there is a baked-clay cylinder inscribed with an account of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. The account states that Marduk, the god of Babylon, "furiously angry" at Nabonidus, the Chaldean king, searched through all lands for a righteous prince unto whom he might deliver Babylon. His choice fell upon Cyrus. Together they marched to Babylon, and Marduk delivered the city into the hands of Cyrus without a blow. The first act of the new king was to send the gods whom Nabonidus had gathered out of the cities of his empire back to their respective dwelling places. This act of his, recorded in the Babylonian annals, witnesses to his general purpose to promote the local religious interests of his realm. Cyrus also reversed the Assyrian-Babylonian policy of transplanting conquered peoples and permitted those who wished to return home to go back to their former habitations.

It is a debatable question what numbers of the exiles set out from Babylonia to rebuild the city of their fathers at Jerusalem. Undoubtedly such as wished to return were free to depart. The first generation of exiles had passed away. The second generation knew no other home than the fertile fields and magnificent cities of their conquerors. Without question the exilic population had increased under these favorable conditions of life. Not even the splendid enthusiasm of the Second Isaiah was able to inspire a large company to forsake the easier conditions of life to undertake the difficult mission of rebuilding the city and reestablishing their ancient religion among the bare moun-

tains so dear to their fathers. But some responded with courageous zeal to the appeal to turn again to Palestine. This chapter traces the events of the first years of the returning exiles.

THE FIRST RETURN OF EXILES FROM BABYLONIA

Cyrus and the Exiles.—Deutero-Isaiah's expectation that Cyrus would give the captive Jews the opportunity to return to Jerusalem was fulfilled. Not only were they given permission to go back to Palestine, but Cyrus gave orders, also, that their Temple at Jerusalem should be rebuilt. He dispatched Sheshbazzar, one of his officers, to escort the returning exiles and to supervise the settlement at Jerusalem. Read the first chapter of Ezra. Cyrus issued his decree in 538 B. C.

Among the apocryphal books of the Old Testament is 1 Esdras, or, as it is sometimes called, the third book of Ezra. With some variations this book parallels our biblical Ezra. It is not improbable that 1 Esdras 5. 1-6 preserves a fragment of a Jewish account of the journey to Jerusalem; 1 Esdras 5. 1, 2 reads:

"After this were the chiefs of fathers' houses chosen to go up according to their tribes, with their wives and sons and daughters, with their manservants, their maidservants, and their cattle. And Cyrus sent with them a thousand horsemen till they had brought them back to Jerusalem safely, and with musical instruments, tabrets and flutes."

This is a likely description. Cyrus would wish them securely settled in their own land, and the return itself awakened lively hopes in those who made the venture, and the tedium of the journey may well have been relieved by abundance of music. See also Ezra 2. 65 for a reference to professional musicians.

Character and Number of the Repatriated.—Ezra 2 lists the people who came back to Jerusalem in 537. A great deal of controversy has been raised over the numbers, and there have been attempts to adjust the discrepancy in the accounts as given in Ezra 2; Nehemiah 7. 6-

73; and 1 Esdras 5. 7-45. The number of those returned probably was fewer than the figures given by Ezra 2. Observe, however, the various persons here listed: the leaders (Ezra 2. 2), the laymen (2. 3-35), Temple officials (2. 36, 37), and those of doubtful Jewish descent (2. 59-63). Among the leaders Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Joshua; Haggai 1. 1) were chief. In the list of returning exiles Temple officials take a leading place. Examine Ezra 2. 36-62. Here are named priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinim. The distinction between priest and Levite is interesting and important. Students of earlier lessons in this course will recall that in the time of the judges and under the monarchy sacrifices customarily were performed by the head of the family. As the sanctuaries became more elaborate, caretakers were needed, who in time took over the offering of sacrifice. The office eventually became hereditary, and a fictitious ancestor, Levi, was provided for them, and priests were called Levites. See Judges 17. 6-13. "Levite" here means simply one who was trained in the manipulation of the oracle. The man in question belonged to the tribe of Judah. At this period the Levite apparently does not offer the sacrifice. Micah as head of the household continues this function. Deuteronomy 18. 1, which expresses the situation in the seventh century, calls all priests "Levites." By this time the Levites, or priests, had charge of the sacrifices. Josiah's reform in 621 B. C. attempted to bring all the country Levites to Jerusalem and put them on the same footing with the Temple Levites. For some reason this was not accomplished. See Deuteronomy 18. 6-8 for the purpose of the reformers and 2 Kings 23. 8, 9 for the failure to place the country Levites on an equality with their city brethren. The first distinction between priests and Levites is made by Ezekiel. See Ezekiel 44. 10-16. Here the priests are still called Levites. But the Levites of Jerusalem, the descendants of Zadok, who championed Solomon's candidacy for the throne (1 Kings 1. 38, 39), alone are regarded true priests by Ezekiel and in his plan of restored Temple worship are to have the right of offering sacrifice.

The country Levites are made menials of the Temple. Ezekiel's reason for this distinction is not historically true. The reader will recall that country and city sanctuaries alike practiced the worship that Ezekiel here condemns. By the end of the Exile this inferiority of the Levites was established, and, consequently, there was great reluctance among them to return to Jerusalem, where the subordination would receive greater emphasis.

This is the earliest mention of a professional class of singers in Jewish worship. It is not probable that any such class of persons existed before the Exile. It was during the Exile that the practice arose of employing musicians in worship. Their task at the period of the rebuilding of the Temple was to conduct the music of the Temple services. The porters, or doorkeepers, were to be placed in charge of the entrances to the Temple. They probably were caretakers as well as keepers of the entrances. All the earlier sanctuaries must have had their guardians. The position was a humble one. This is evidenced by the Psalmist, who exclaimed:

“I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Psalms 84.
10).

The Nethinim were the lowest in rank of all the ministrants at the Temple. Little is known about them. It has been conjectured that they were slaves and probably foreigners. Temple slaves were a common feature of Babylonian life. Later they disappear from Jewish life.

THE WORK OF ZERUBBABEL AND JOSHUA

Read the third chapter of Ezra. On reaching Palestine the people seemed to have settled in Jerusalem and the surrounding towns (Ezra 2. 70; 3. 1). What was the first public act of the returned exiles? Who were the leaders in this work? Which of the two is regarded the more important? See also Haggai 1. 1. In the light of past chapters what written law of Moses was in the possession of these altar builders? Ezra 3. 3 is a corrupt

text. Batten proposes heroically to substitute a variant reading of 1 Esdras 5. 50, as follows: "And they erected the altar upon its own place" (that is, where it had stood in the court of Solomon's Temple); "and there were gathered unto them some from other nations of the land, and they were well disposed toward the altar, and they aided them, and they offered sacrifices at the proper season and burnt offerings to Jehovah night and morning."¹ This situation of good will of the mixed residents of Palestine toward the efforts of the Jewish community is not improbable. Observe carefully the reestablishment of the various religious festivals of Israel's earliest life in Palestine. The daily sacrifices are now more elaborate than formerly. See 2 Kings 16. 15.

After establishing the sacrificial ritual what was the community's next concern? What preparations were made? To what extent were the measures for rebuilding the Temple carried out? What inference may be drawn as to the extent of the destruction of the city in 586 B. C. and the desolation of the intervening years? How much time had elapsed since the destruction of the Temple until the foundations were now laid? Read Ezra 4. 1-5 and state the obstacles that now arose to prevent the completion of the Temple. What insight is here given into the religion of Palestine during the past half century? Who are these people whose help was declined? The rebuilding of the Temple, begun so joyously in 536 B. C., now dragged along until 520 B. C. (A great deal of confusion runs through this whole period from the return to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the course of events here followed is not free from objection.) Cyrus died in 529. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was a profligate despot, guilty of many atrocious deeds; and, therefore, his interest in Jewish Temple building was little indeed. It was not until Darius Hystaspis came to the throne of the Persian Empire that Jewish hopes again revived. At the accession of Darius, 521 B. C., the Persian Empire was threatened

¹"International Critical Commentary," page 109.

with dissolution. Various provinces nearly succeeded in setting up independent kingdoms. It was under such circumstances, which seemed to fulfill the Messianic predictions of Ezekiel (chapters 25 to 32), that Haggai and Zechariah, prophets of the Jewish community in Palestine, aroused their countrymen to undertake with new zeal the rebuilding of the Temple.

THE MISSION OF HAGGAI

Read Ezra 5. 1, 2. To whose inspiring leadership was the new effort to complete the Temple due? This was in 520 B. C. Who are now in charge of the Jewish community? Read Haggai 1. What position is now held by Zerubbabel? Zerubbabel was the grandson of Jehoiachin and was therefore a prince of the house of David. It is not known when he was made governor. What was Haggai's position in the community? Observe the words by which the people excuse their failure to complete the Temple. Verse 2 should run: "*This people say, 'The time has not come for Jehovah's house to be built.'*" What led the people to this conclusion? What was Haggai's retort? What insight is given into the economic conditions of the past sixteen years? What is Haggai's explanation of this poverty? Did the people acquiesce in his interpretation of their wretched condition? What motive induced Zerubbabel and his countrymen to undertake anew the work of rebuilding?

Read Haggai 2. 1-9. A month or two of building revealed the magnitude of the task and the slenderness of their resources. Solomon's Temple, destroyed sixty-six years previously, was remembered by a few of the oldest members of the community, and the new building seemed to be nothing in comparison. The workers were disheartened. What is Haggai's message at this state of affairs? In what way will the glory of the second Temple surpass the first? Read 2. 10-19. This sermon was delivered a few weeks after the previous discourse. Again discouragement was hindering the work on the Temple. What

was the source of this depression? In the previous discourse Haggai declared that if the people would be strong and labor diligently, Jehovah would be with them. He promised also abundance of wealth to enrich and adorn the Temple. In 1. 9-11 what is the evidence which Haggai offers of Jehovah's favor? If no change occurred in the material conditions of the community since the Temple began to be rebuilt in 520, would this continued lack of prosperity discourage the builders? Note the argument of Haggai to encourage his countrymen: "Your own negligence and coldness in the past, like contact with a corpse, has rendered your sacrifices objectionable to Jehovah. His displeasure has been shown in shortage of field and vineyard. But now that you have undertaken the work of rebuilding in earnest you may expect his favor. But since you have but sown your seed, and the grape, fig, pomegranate, and olive are yet far from fruitage, you cannot expect an immediate evidence of Jehovah's favorable disposition toward you. But from this day forward you may count upon his good will and blessing."

Haggai closes his prophetic ministry with a prediction of the Messianic era. Darius, who followed Cambyses on the throne of the Persian Empire, was embarrassed for a time by a series of revolts in various parts of his dominion. It appeared for a time that the Persian Empire would break into pieces. This political situation encouraged Haggai to believe that the Messianic age frequently predicted was to be ushered in. Read 2. 20-23. Here it is said that Jehovah is shaking heaven and earth and overthrowing the nations. "In that day . . . will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee." In this veiled language Haggai announces to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, that Jehovah is about to inaugurate the Messianic age and will install him as its Messianic king. Here, as in the majority of Jewish Messianic programs, the people are to do nothing to achieve their own hopes. No social struggle toward the better day is demanded. Jehovah of hosts will accomplish everything. The absence of an evangelis-

tic or missionary spirit in the attitude of Haggai toward the Gentiles is to be noted.

OTHER RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE PERIOD

The sacred lot.—Examine Ezra 2. 62, 63. As long as there was no direct evidence of the validity of certain priestly claims, an appeal was to be made to Urim and Thummim. Apparently at the earliest period of the return there was no one of the priests regarded as superior in rank to the others. The high priesthood became gradually a recognized office in Israel. Undoubtedly through the eighth and seventh centuries prophetism discounted the appeal to the sacred lot. With no strong prophetic leadership in the restored community the older practice of ascertaining the Deity's will assumed new importance.

Jurists.—The priests are the custodians and the interpreters of the law. See Haggai 2. 12. This was an old function, but with the development of fuller codes the priests more and more became the teachers of the community.

Holiness and uncleanness.—Read Haggai 2. 12, 13. Note the meaning here of "holiness." Holy flesh is flesh that has been prepared for sacrifice upon the altar of Jehovah. It is holy because it has been devoted to the service of the Deity. As we shall see in later chapters, these holy objects transmit their holiness to other objects by contact. It is probable that the one who carries the flesh in his skirt is a priest. In that case the garment is holy. But the holiness of the garment, getting its sanctity from the sacred flesh, is less holy than the meat for sacrifice. The holiness is weakened in transmission. This holiness of the skirt is so much less that it is not able to infect any object which it touches. A corpse, like sacrificial flesh, is taboo, and for the same reason. Both alike are dangerous. One must not offend the Deity by any commonness of treatment of anything which belongs to him; nor must one treat carelessly the spirit of the dead, which is believed among primitive peoples to hover near the body until dissolution of the flesh takes place. Hence, among primi-

tive people there is no distinction between holiness and uncleanness. Both are an expression of the fear that the spirit, whether of man or deity, offended by lack of respect, will revenge himself upon the thoughtless or the daring. Holiness and uncleanness alike are dangerous properties of persons and things which can be passed on by contact. Holiness in time came to have an ethical meaning and then found an enduring place in the terminology and ideals of religion.

TIMELESS TRUTHS

Think of the vast community of interests in which the affairs of any people are involved. A Median prince's ambition to rule the world unbarred the world's first ghetto and made possible the resurrection of Jewish religion. No nation lives unto itself. Patriotism is the immediate enemy of universal brotherhood. When any country's nationalism overrides its sense of loyalty to civilization, that nation becomes a menace to mankind. For the thoughtful man the world has become a neighborhood. The quarrels of Europe, the mastery of the Far East, the lift of superstition from uncivilized Africans, the spiritual sterility of the Mohammedan world, are problems as near the citizen as the unsanitary stench of the alleys in his city or civic corruption in his town government. Our world has become a universe, and a true man possesses a universal mind. The joys and the sorrows, the successes and failures, of all peoples are his concern.

This postexilic community exhibits the barrenness of a society that possesses no prophets. The chief power of a prophet is his clear, ethical vision. Beside righteousness the remainder of man's achievements shrinks to nothingness. Such men have a program. Progress is an open road. They possess a sense of sureness which crowns them with leadership. As long as we seek God's will wholly in the writings of the past, as did these returned exiles, there will come no aggressive leadership among us. In order that we may advance his kingdom, God ever must seem to us expectant to reveal to us his new purposes. The

voices that guide us must not call to us out of the past; they must flash their summons upon us out of radiant dawns. The past is dead; the future alone is alive. Civilization still wears its swaddling clothes. The universe is young and undiscovered and summons us to put forth our spiritual caravels from ancient ports and steer boldly into the unknown.

It is a weakness of religion that it clings to material evidences of its validity. The returned exiles were dismayed by poor harvests. Even Haggai could offer no other evidences of Jehovah's good will than full granaries and overflowing wine vats. The Temple could not help but be long building and would not be permanently significant in such a circle of ideas. Examine your own ideas of what are the marks of your heavenly Father's good will. Does this evidence of favor consist in a full purse, a splendid position, a growing business, or a robust health? Then you belong to the life of those far-off centuries. Measured by such a test, Pilate was dearer to God than Christ, Nero more religious than Paul, Cesare Borgia a greater saint than Savonarola, and Tetzal a greater kingdom builder than Luther. It is not health of body but wholesomeness of soul, not riches in the bank but wealth of moral convictions, not the flattering attention of the press but that likeness of soul which fits one to care for Christ, which are the supreme marks of God's gracious relation to man.

GUIDES TO THE MASTERY OF THE LESSON

1. What conditions in Babylonia made possible the return of Jewish exiles to Palestine?

2. What motives induced some of these exiles to return to Jerusalem? What reasons persuaded others to remain in Babylonia? When did the return take place? How many made the journey at this time? Who were the leaders?

3. How many priests are said to have returned? Levites? State the history of the use of the term "Levite." Why did not more Levites return to the land of their fathers?

4. What political organization did the restored community possess? What were the relations of the returned exiles to the inhabitants of Palestine? What is known of these older residents?

5. What is Zerubbabel's connection with the new Jewish state? Why did Haggai so intimately associate him with the Messianic kingdom?

6. Estimate Haggai's services. What resemblances does he present to older prophets? What are the defects of his ideas?

7. Why do the priests assume such importance in the post-exilic community? The sacrificial conception of worship is established more firmly than ever: why were the people so little influenced by the prophetic idea of religion?

8. Why did so many years elapse before the building of the Temple was completed? What is the accepted evidence of Jehovah's favor? What is the defect in this conception? What was Haggai's contribution to ethical religion? What is his conception of the Messianic kingdom?

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CHAPTER XVI

FROM ZECHARIAH TO NEHEMIAH

THE rebuilding of the Temple, begun by the exiles who returned in 536 B. C., slackened or ceased until 520, when the despondent community, stimulated by Haggai, began its task with new devotion. Zechariah, whose prophecies were uttered 520-518, brought the dejected workers new inspiration. Encouraged by the faith of these two prophets, Zerubbabel and Joshua led their people to the completion of the Temple in 516 B. C. From this date until the arrival of Nehemiah in 445 B. C. the political history of the Jews is obscure. It is reasonably certain, however, that the book of Malachi and the prophecies found in Isaiah 56 to 66 reflect the discouragements, hopes, and beliefs of this period.

The Teaching of Zechariah.—Zechariah's interest is in the Messianic kingdom. Like Haggai he believes that the rebuilding of the Temple is the first essential of the rise again of Jehovah's rule in Palestine. Jehovah's residence, in the thought of Israel's leaders, was not fixed again in the Temple, but the Temple was the one acceptable place to meet him and was the visible manifestation of his favor. To rebuild the Temple, therefore, was the immediate prelude of the Messianic kingdom.

The Messianic Kingdom.—(a) *The shaking of the nations.*—Read 1. 7-21. If you keep in mind that Ezekiel, the Second Isaiah, and Haggai had expected that a shaking of the nations would precede the advent of the golden age in Israel, the meaning of Zechariah's first vision becomes clear. Two or three months previously Haggai had sought to encourage the Jewish community by asserting that a shaking up of the nations within a little while would be the hour chosen by Jehovah to set up his Messianic rule. But political disturbances, instead of increasing, grew less.

Darius succeeded in quelling revolts in various parts of his empire. The Jews, who had come to expect catastrophic disturbances as the prelude to a new Jewish age, again became downhearted. Although the four horsemen who patrol the earth report that the nations are at rest, Zechariah declares that Jehovah is none the less displeased with the nations and exceedingly jealous for the prosperity of Jerusalem. The prophet implies that the shaking up of the nations is not abandoned but only temporarily delayed.

(b) *The Messianic kingdom is founded upon righteousness.* Read 1. 3-6. Zechariah reminds his countrymen that the word of the prophets who declared that righteousness is the foundation of the state has been vindicated by the afflictions that have fallen upon the Jewish people. Zechariah does not charge his own community with specific evils; but he assures his hearers that ethical holiness and loyalty to Jehovah are essentials to his favor.

Read 3. 1-7. The filthy garments of Joshua symbolize the defilement of the sanctuary and the priesthood by the heathen during the exile. The people themselves, by their contact with non-Jewish worship and by life in other than Jehovah's land, likewise have become filthy. The filthy garments of the high priest are symbolical of this iniquity and they must be stripped from him to make him acceptable to Jehovah. Joshua is assured that if he is faithful to Jehovah and carefully maintains the services of the Temple he shall be placed in permanent authority over the Temple and shall be the representative of the people in dealing with Jehovah. Read 5. 1-4. This vision of the flying roll is Zechariah's assurance that Jehovah will purge sinners—thieves and perjurers—from the Messianic state.

Read chapter 7. Here the true spirit of prophecy reappears. A deputation came from Bethel to Jerusalem to inquire whether certain fasts should be observed. The visit may have been occasioned by a threat of famine or by some other possible misfortune. We do not know what the priests of Jerusalem answered. But Zechariah implies that it matters little to Jehovah whether they fast or not. Fasts

and sacrifices, he says, were observed by the people for themselves; they had no bearing in the determination of Jehovah's purposes. They ought to have known better than to raise such an inquiry. Former prophets had spoken clearly enough. They had repeatedly taught the people that Jehovah does not ask sacrifice. He requires justice, kindness, and a daily effort to know and to obey his will. He asks that men shall show compassion to their unfortunate fellow men. The weak and dependent members of the community—the widow, the orphan, the sojourner, and the poor—must be the loving care of those placed in a more stable social position. It is such spirit and action which win the favor of Jehovah and guarantee his help in the promotion of the peace and prosperity of the state. It is righteousness rather than ritual which enlists the help of Jehovah. It is to be noted that, according to Zechariah, the Messianic age does not depend on Jehovah alone; it is conditioned upon the energetic practice of social righteousness in Israel.

Read chapter 8. The prophet here adds some details of the manner of life in the new age. Jehovah takes up his residence in Jerusalem, which is to be called the city of truth. Mount Zion, because of Jehovah's residence, will be known as the holy mountain. In the open spaces of the city men and women of advanced age shall spend their last years in the quiet enjoyment of life, and the streets will ring with the shouts of boys and girls at play. In 2. 1-5 the prophet adds another touch to his portraiture of a peaceful, prosperous city. In 8. 6-8 the complete restoration of the exiles scattered in far countries is promised. Verses 12-15 are an assurance of agricultural prosperity in the coming golden days. The people of Jerusalem and Judah must not fear: Jehovah has sufficiently punished his people. His purpose now is to do good to his people. Verses 16 and 17 require, as a prerequisite of the coming and the continuance of the better day, that the people shall speak the truth, establish justice in all their dealings, and refrain from every unworthy thought and action in all their human relationships.

The Messiah.—Examine 3. 8-10. What term here describes the Messianic prince? The reference undoubtedly is to Zerubbabel. The verb translated “I will bring forth” indicates an act taking place in the immediate future. Observe (4. 4-14) that Zerubbabel, although the sovereignty of the people is divided with Joshua, is the leader of the community and in charge of the completion of the Temple. See, further, 6. 11. The text here has been altered. One crown was to be made and it was to be placed upon the head of Zerubbabel. This is clear from the fact that “the Branch” is to build the Temple. This person, as we have seen already, is Zerubbabel. In verse 13, instead of “and he shall be a priest upon his throne,” read “and Joshua shall be priest upon his right hand.” Thus, the new state will have its double rulership: Joshua at the head of the system of worship, and Zerubbabel, Jehovah’s prince, to enforce the divine government.

(a) *Other religious ideas of Zechariah.*—Jehovah’s government of the world: Read again 1. 7-15. Where is Jehovah’s residence? How does he keep in touch with the world? Observe the very important statement in verse 15. This is the first hint in Old-Testament literature that the good and evil in men and nations were not directly authorized by Jehovah. Zechariah asserts that the nations that chastised Israel exceeded their instructions. Is Jehovah conceived as dwelling so far above the human world that he does not know its happenings until his ministers inform him? Or could he not prevent these nations in the furtherance of their ends? Note in many places the use of angels in the divine administration. What conditions warranted the introduction of these new conceptions?

Examine 3. 1-3 for another new character. Who is this Satan, and what is his business? What conditions made possible this addition to Jewish religious ideas?

Observe that (in Haggai and Zechariah) Joshua is named continually as the head of the priestly community. Zechariah goes further and lifts the chief priest into the high priesthood, which plays such an important rôle in

later Judaism. See 3. 5, 8 for additional witness of the growing importance of this office.

(b) *Zechariah's fine hopes were doomed to disappointment.* There was no tumult of nations. Darius set his empire in better order, and his provinces were ruled in peace. Zerubbabel did not wear his crown, and there is no hint anywhere what became of him. The Temple was completed; but if Jehovah came to dwell in it, there was no outward golden age of righteousness or material splendor to witness to his presence. For the next half century the Jewish community struggled on bewildered and disheartened. There is no record in Jewish literature of this period. (It is possible that Ezra 4. 6 is an authentic historical note. This states that at the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus—that is, Xerxes, 486-465—somebody accused by letter the people of Judah and Jerusalem before the Persian emperor.) But there ever must have been a faithful band to keep hope alive. Somewhere in the earlier half of the fifth century, 475-458, there appeared another prophetic voice in the silence and the darkness to witness to the ideals of true religion.

MALACHI

Malachi means "my messenger," and the word, therefore, may not be the name of the writer and speaker of the messages of this book.

Social Disturbances.—There are at least three leading evils that vitiate the religious life of Israel in Malachi's day, which Jehovah will visit in judgment:

(a) *The community has grown careless and indifferent to the Temple worship.* For Malachi, as for Haggai and Zechariah, the Temple is the center of the nation's life. Like theirs, his interests are greater than the worship at the Temple, but he recognizes its exceeding importance in these troublesome times. Read 1. 6-12 and note that religion is not a dominant interest in the community. Of what does Malachi accuse the priests? In what way does he justify his accusation? Observe his fine perception that heathen worship really is offered to Jehovah; and

that, because pagan peoples offer their worship sincerely and devotedly, although they suppose it is rendered to their pagan gods, Jehovah receives it more favorably than he does the half-hearted, disloyal worship of Jerusalem. The people equally were remiss. Of what are they accused in 1. 13, 14? What other neglect of worship is denounced in 3. 8, 9?

(b) *But this is not all: The old preexilic social distinctions are reappearing, and the common weal is disregarded by the strong:* (1) Observe the priestly duties outlined in 2. 5-7. How have priests, custodians, and teachers of the law fulfilled their responsibilities? Note the charge in 2. 8. (2) Consider the foreign marriage and divorce. Examine 2. 11 and state Malachi's objection to marriage with non-Jewish women. Read 2. 13-16 for the prophet's protest against divorce. In what words does he describe the grief of the divorced wives? (3) Of what other evils is the community guilty? (3. 5, 6).

(c) *There is yet a worse count against Israel: Some have grown skeptical regarding the love of Jehovah and the worth of religion.* Examine 1. 2; 2. 17; 3. 14, 15 and state the nature of this doubt. What has produced this skepticism? What is Malachi's answer? (1. 2-5; 3. 16 to 4. 3).

The Messianic Kingdom.—(a) *The day of Jehovah.*—As with the older prophets Jehovah's visit in judgment is rather upon Israel than upon the nations which have afflicted the Jew. Jehovah will appear suddenly in his Temple (3. 1), but his appearance will be a grievous visitation. Examine 3. 1-6; 4. 1-6 and state the time, the manner of its coming, the purpose and the results of this judgment day. Why is Elijah thought to be the forerunner of this visitation?

(b) *The promise.*—Examine 3. 16, 17; 4. 2, 3 and observe the cleavage here indicated in the Jewish community and the promise that the pious, faithful members of the state shall rise into control of those before whom they now are abashed. What is the destined end of those who now neglect or despise Jehovah's ordinances?

ISAIAH 56-66

Chapters 56 to 66 in the book of Isaiah come from one of the dark hours of Jewish history. We cannot be certain of their authorship. They have been spoken of by some as the prophecies of "the Third Isaiah." We will not have time to examine them all.

(a) *The dark hour.*—First read Isaiah 56. 9 to 57. 13 for a stern denunciation of selfish and sensuous leaders of the community and of religious practices with which true ethical religion could have nothing to do. What sins are denounced in Isaiah 56. 9-12? Examine 57. 1, 2 and state some of the results of misrule. See also Isaiah 59. 1-5 for another statement of the crimes of the leaders of the community. Examine attentively 57. 3-10 and observe the manifold accusations of debased worship. Sorcery, unbridled sexual license in the name of worship at the high places, sacrifices to non-Jewish deities, phallic rites, and necromancy are here denounced. Read also 65. 3, 4, 11; 66. 17 for an additional list of ancient superstitions and pagan modes of worship. These were no recent importation into Palestinian life. They were partly old Canaanitish practices, which never had been eradicated from the life of the common folk, and partly the worship of the non-Jewish people settled in Palestine during the decadent period of the Jewish state. In this period of despair and through mixed marriages they had crept into Judaism.

(b) *The coming dawn.*—This prophet believes that such conditions cannot endure. The wicked rulers and apostate worshipers shall be destroyed (59. 18; 60. 18; 65. 6, 7, 11, 12). But fortunately there is another class in the Judean community. For those faithful loyal servants of Jehovah—the true Israel in the midst of these dark times—Jehovah's judgment brings prosperity and peace. See 65. 9, 10, 17-25 for pictures of the restored Jewish state. Chapters 60 to 62 are a series of songs glorifying the Messianic age. They are worth examining attentively. A Redeemer is to come to Zion (59. 20), and Jerusalem is

exhorted to exalt herself in the glory of Jehovah. What are the elements of this golden age? Exilic Jews and wandering Gentiles shall resort to Jerusalem (60. 3, 4); the wealth of the world shall stream into Palestine (60. 5-17); injustice and misrule shall have ceased (60. 18). State the striking conception of this City of God in 60. 19-22. Who is the speaker in 61. 1-3? To whom does he speak in 61. 5-7? In 61. 10, 11 restored Israel voices her happiness. The prophet (62. 1-5) again resumes his predictions of the golden age and declares that he will not cease his preaching until the Messianic times dawn.

SUMMARY

This lesson is a survey of the religious life of the Palestinian Jews during the extremely despairing years from the rebuilding of the second Temple (520-516) to the arrival of Nehemiah (445). During these seventy-five years the outward fortunes of the community have not improved. Within the Jewish state two parties have arisen: one with its liking for non-Jewish religious practices, its disregard for justice and righteousness, its pride and skepticism, and its reliance upon ritual at the expense of righteousness; the other represented by the prophets, who cling to Jehovah, worship him in the spirit of the old Deuteronomic reformers, and believe that Jehovah will reward them and justify himself by an approaching advent to judgment upon the nations and upon Jerusalem.

There are three phases of this judgment program which dominated the thinking of this second party in the days immediately preceding the arrival of Nehemiah: (a) The postponement of the nation's final deliverance from its troubles is due to the prevalence of evils within the Jewish community at Jerusalem. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (59. 2) is the Third Isaiah's analysis of the community's forlornness and desolation. (b) Jehovah no longer will seek for a human helper to usher in the better day. He alone will deliver his people. "His own arm brought salvation" (59. 16); "I have trodden the winepress alone" (63. 3). (c) While the Jewish

state, having suffered so long at the hands of the nations, is to be ministered unto by the nations, there is an echo of the "servant mission" of the nation. The people shall become a priestly nation: it will be its function to mediate between nations and Jehovah (61. 6). But the transformed city undertakes no distant missions. Gentilic worship is acceptable only when performed at Jerusalem (56. 7). The Temple becomes a universal house of prayer only for those who are drawn to Jerusalem by its glory.

THE PROGRESS OF THE KINGDOM

There are dark hours for the kingdom builders in every land and age. The modern Christian war cry, "The world for Christ in our generation!" and the rapid political and social changes in non-Christian lands sent a thrill of expectation and the hope of a speedy universal triumph of the kingdom of God into the faintest heart. The world war with the central empires of Europe checked this optimism. There are weary years still to be traversed by the undaunted disciples of Christ. Progress never is thrust upon a man or a people. We progress by becoming progressives. We live by keeping our souls alive to the things worth while. Dark years there will always be for the individual and the nation whose soul is not lit imperiously with the splendor of the world that ought to be.

Yet no age is hopeless whose darkness is not accepted apathetically. This Jewish half century following the completion of the second Temple, lacking in faith and heroism and wanting great statesmanship, carried at its heart burning protests against social injustice, sensual evils, and formal worship. The man, the city, or the civilization whose evils awaken no condemnation within is hopelessly dead. As long as sin arouses the passionate protest of conscience, there is a living chance for God's kingdom to come.

It seems a little thing to lift only a protesting voice. To draw a sword against unrighteousness seems far more worth while. To frame a law, to hale a criminal into its

outraged presence, to possess executive power, seems something to be coveted; but to be only a voice crying out against evil in a wilderness of wrong seems so futile. But without unceasing moral protest the legislator draws up his code in vain, the judge in vain calls his court, and vainly does the executive seek to punish evil. Go, then, bravely to your unending moral duty of condemning wrong and praising virtue; talk earnestly against every individual and community evil. It is your protest that saves society from rottenness and despair.

We must learn to value in its true proportions bold and vigorous speech in the face of oppression, vice, ignorance, temptation, and soulless tradition. The world learns slowly to admire the patriotism of the social reformer. To brave alone the oppression of a dominant social class, the evils rooted in the habits of a people, the wrongs that enrich the unscrupulous, requires a loftier courage than to swing into battle intoxicated by its danger. The world has seen no finer devotion to duty than the unwelcome messages of the Hebrew prophets. Our civilization often seems coarse and brutal. Measured by our ideals, the race has not journeyed far from savagery. Yet when progress is tested by the tears and the blood of those prophets and martyrs who loved their fellow men enough to brave their ignorant hate unto death, we seem to have reached the hills of heaven. Our political and religious liberty is consecrated by an innumerable host of heroes. They were not silent in the face of injustice and tyranny. Wickedness could not frown them down. Their vision of what ought to be inspired them to denounce existing evils, and their feeling for the oppressed elected them to the generalship of the straggling army of the common man.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is Zechariah's valuation of the sacrificial ritual?
2. Why were men like Zechariah and Malachi, who saw so clearly the evils of ritualistic worship, so interested in the Temple?
3. How is the rise of the belief in angels to be accounted for? What is their function?

4. What is the position and function of Satan in the government of the world?

5. Why did the prophets so frequently associate the inauguration of the Messianic era with world-wide political disturbances?

6. To what extent was the blessed era dependent on human initiative?

7. How may the fact be accounted for that although the Messianic predictions remained unfulfilled, the hope of the golden age continually reappears in Jewish prophecy?

8. What prophets thus far studied expected a Messiah?

9. What are the leading characteristics of the Messianic reign?

10. Why does the Messianic hope become a more prominent subject of prophecy after the destruction of Jerusalem than it was with the preexilic writers?

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CHAPTER XVII

NEHEMIAH: BUILDER AND REFORMER

THE preceding chapter carried the story of Israel's religion to the year 445 B. C. The building of the Temple, completed in 516, was followed by an extended period of distress in the Jewish community. Chapter XVI presented the dominant religious ideas and leaders during that period of stagnation. The present chapter is a study chiefly of the mission and achievements of Nehemiah. This man, whose influence was so far-reaching in the development of Judaism, was one of the Babylonian Jews and a cupbearer to Artaxerxes I, the Persian king. This was a position of great importance and it gave Nehemiah a rare chance to advance the fortunes of his countrymen.

The order of events at this period is a greatly controverted question. Whether Ezra preceded or followed Nehemiah in Jerusalem is a difficult problem. No universally satisfactory solution of the difficulty has been found. The chronological order of their labors adopted here and in the next chapter assigns Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem in the years 445-433, his second visit about 425, and Ezra's some years later.

THE FIRST VISIT OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah, Governor of Judah.—Read 1. 1 to 2. 11. Who was Nehemiah? Where was he living, and what was he doing? What awakened his new interest in Jerusalem? The student will observe the emphasis upon prayer in these memoirs of Nehemiah. It seems to me likely that the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah were used by a chronicler to write the book Ezra-Nehemiah, and that he found a brief prayer of Nehemiah's recorded and elaborated it into the petition recorded in 1. 5-11. But the

prayer may well express the religious convictions of thoughtful Jews in the midst of the distresses of the middle of the fifth century. Note especially the ideas of deity: character, relation to Israel, and the nature of his demands from his people. Also, observe the explanation of the people's afflictions. What is the immediate object of this prayer? In what manner was the way opened for Nehemiah to make his request? What did Nehemiah wish to do? What commission did he receive? What is said of the journey? Sanballat was governor of Samaria at this time, and his opposition expresses the Samaritan antagonism toward Jerusalem.

Nehemiah in Jerusalem.—(a) *His first measure.*—Read 2. 12-20 and explain Nehemiah's need for secrecy and the twofold reception of his proposal to rebuild the walls.

(b) *The building of the wall and the Samaritan opposition.*—The third chapter of Nehemiah, describing the towns and guilds at work upon the fortifications, may be read only by the most studious. Read chapter 4. What were the first measures taken by the Samaritan party to frustrate the purpose of Nehemiah? To what additional methods did they resort? (4. 8). In what way was this new danger met by Nehemiah? Note again Nehemiah's resort to prayer.

(c) *Further efforts to stop the fortifications of Jerusalem (chapter 6).*—What was the device of Sanballat and his party to get Nehemiah into their hands? State the manner in which the governor avoided the trap. What was Sanballat's next attempt to overthrow the work of Nehemiah, and how was the attack met? State the third conspiracy and its outcome. Note especially the character of the numerous prophets at this period. One other attempt to thwart the high endeavors of Nehemiah is mentioned. Consider the statement and explain the purpose of this correspondence.

(d) *The defense and the repopulation of Jerusalem.*—In 7. 1-3 it is stated that when wall and gates were completely restored, gatekeepers were appointed, and the city's defense placed in charge of Hananiah, captain of the for-

truss, and Hanani, Nehemiah's brother—men of undoubted trustworthiness. Sentries sufficient to guard the walls were stationed at regular intervals. The city, now that it was secure with walls, became suitable for residence, and Nehemiah called a conference of nobles, rulers, and the people. The chiefs, or rulers, alone seem to have resided within the city at the time of the completion of the walls (11. 1). The people were asked to volunteer to leave their villages to reside in Jerusalem and were highly praised for their sacrifice (11. 2). But not enough volunteered to satisfy the rulers, and a tenth of the surrounding population was chosen by lot (11. 1). Since the business of the Jewish community at this time was almost wholly agricultural, it involved a hardship upon those who lived by daily manual toil to reside in the city.

The Social Distress of the Judæan Community.—Read Nehemiah 5. These conditions arose after the people were induced to settle in the city and near the close of the twelve years that made up Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem. Note the three forms in which the economic distress presented itself to the men and women who suffered thereby: overcrowded population, scanty harvests, and the royal tax. What measures were forced upon these poorer people to meet these emergencies? What especially constituted the bitterness of the situation? In what way did Nehemiah rectify these wrongs? Note the two classes upon whom Nehemiah laid the responsibility for these intolerable conditions. What rare tribute to Nehemiah's character is given in 5. 8? What incredible perfidy of the Jerusalem nobles is narrated in this same verse? Verse 10 should be corrected to read, "*I myself have lent the people money and grain, but I have not accepted interest.*" What definite demand does the governor now make of the nobles? Observe that the nobles are made to take oath before the priests to fulfill their promise to Nehemiah. What further act of Nehemiah's tended to make certain the restitution of property? State definitely the public service rendered by Nehemiah in supporting the finances of the feeble state.

THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah, who undoubtedly had remained away from the court of Artaxerxes longer than either he or his monarch had anticipated, at the end of twelve years returned to the Persian capital. How long he remained at Susa is not known. Since his royal patron died in 425 B. C., and since Eliashib was still high priest, and Tobiah was still living to arouse the antagonism of the stricter Jewish party, Nehemiah could not have been absent from Jerusalem more than four or five years.

Read Nehemiah 13. 1-9. The task of the stricter Jews to build up the state of their desires was exceedingly difficult. It may be assumed that Nehemiah was not slack in correcting religious and moral abuses during the twelve years of his first governorship. But during his absence a weaker governor was unable to prevent either a neglect of worship and ritual or social injustice on the part of Jewish leaders. The tithes were not paid, and in consequence of this fact certain rooms in the Temple were not in use. Eliashib, the high priest, in violation of a Deuteronomic law (23. 3-5), had altered the interior rooms of the Temple to provide a dwelling place for his kinsman Tobiah. This action was irregular in two particulars: Tobiah was not a priest nor was he a Jew. Nehemiah curtly remarks that he was not at Jerusalem when Eliashib made these arrangements. It was short work for the returned governor to eject Tobiah's household stuff from the Temple and restore the rooms for the purpose intended.

The people had grown careless in the presentation of tithes. As a result of the scarcity of revenue the Levites and the Temple singers were forced to leave the city and cultivate their fields. Nehemiah (13. 10-14) compelled the resumption of payment of tithes of grain, wine, and oil, and appointed trustworthy persons to distribute them to the various Temple officials whose support came from such tithes.

Read 13. 15-22. The energetic spirit and religious

zeal of the governor is revealed further in his compulsion of a better Sabbath observance. Apparently no distinction was being made between the Sabbath and the other days of the week. Labor in fields and vineyards went on, farmers brought their goods to the city for sale, and even a Tyrian fish market was permitted on the day that, for many centuries, had been designated a day of rest by Jewish law. Nehemiah reproached the leaders for this open violation of Jewish religion and warned them that such conduct would bring upon the struggling community the calamities that the sins of their fathers in earlier times had brought upon Jerusalem. The city gates, by Nehemiah's orders, were closed during the Sabbath. But the industrious merchants held their markets outside the walls, and the conscienceless citizens went forth and traded as usual. Then Nehemiah threatened them with arrest and punishment, and the evil ceased.

Read 13. 23-29. Other laws of Deuteronomy had been set aside by the careless and easy-going community. Jews had intermarried with foreigners, and these mixed marriages were not confined to the humble citizens. Even a grandson of the high priest Eliashib had married a daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria and one of Nehemiah's most persistent enemies. The governor applied heroic remedies. He expostulated with the men for their conduct, cursed them, struck some of them, and plucked out the hair of others. The son-in-law of Sanballat was expelled from Jerusalem. Under such persuasion Nehemiah was able to obtain a promise under oath that mixed marriages should cease.

These various reforms—and, undoubtedly, there were many others whose record has not come down to us—indicate the danger into which the Jerusalem community had fallen. There were probably two reasons for this recurring laxness: With the destruction of Jerusalem and the devastation of Judah by the Babylonians neighboring peoples had pressed into Jewish territory. In many cases fields and villages were largely in the hands of the former neighbors of Judah. Carelessness toward Jewish

worship naturally would result from the presence of these foreigners. Intermarriage, natural under the circumstances, added to the neglect of Jewish rites. Nehemiah discovered that there were children of Jews who could not speak the Jewish tongue. Then, too, the repeated failure of Messianic prophecy tended toward laxness of religion. A century had passed since a line of prophets had begun to preach that the dawning of the Messianic age was at hand. These hopes of a grand and blessed Jewish state remained unfulfilled. Naturally, a spirit of skepticism pervaded priests and nobles, and consequently they drifted into a selfish pessimism, which contented itself with getting out of life the best for themselves. It was of the highest moment in the progress of Jewish religion that a man like Nehemiah spent a dozen years and more as governor of Judah and maintained an oversight of Jewish affairs through two decades in which the spirit and institutions of Judaism were in greatest jeopardy.

ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE TOWARD NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was an energetic and strong-willed man. He knew what was needed in Jerusalem, and his own patriotic, unselfish, and unflagging devotion to religion enabled him to carry through his reforms. The office of governor, his position in the Persian court, his wealth, his armed retainers, and the friends he made among the Levites by his advocacy of their cause all contributed to his success. But he had arrayed against him many of the priests and nobles of Judah. There was much opposition to his ideas and reforms. He made many enemies. There is one fine piece of literary evidence of this opposition which has been preserved for us in the Old-Testament canon. It is the book of Ruth. Nehemiah reminded the men of Jerusalem that the marriage of Solomon with foreign women, notwithstanding his greatness, was a grievous sin that stained his character. Some priest, scribe, or noble replied to this argument by writing the beautiful story of Ruth, the Moabitess. Marriage with foreigners cannot be

such a great offense, is the argument of this book, for David himself was the descendant of a foreigner. From the house of David we expect our Messianic prince to come. How, then, in the light of this illustrious example of Judah's kings, can our marriage with these foreigners who have come to live among us be so sinful? Whatever we think of the beautiful devotion of Ruth, Nehemiah would have seen in this story only the fact that the Davidic line had been vitiated by the introduction of Moabitish blood.

SUMMARY

Nehemiah is the leading figure of the Palestinian Jews for at least two decades (445-424 B. C.). His memoirs, part of which are now incorporated in the Biblical Nehemiah, possess the highest historical value. They show us the spirit of Judaism at work in its earliest years. Judaism is essentially a religious state, separated by race and by religion from the remainder of the world, this separatist policy being continually fanned by a growing fanaticism for Jewish law and customs. It must be borne in mind, however, that the perils of the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods of Jewish history, apart from this rise of Judaism, would have crushed the political and religious life of Israel. Therefore, the work of Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls and the enforced purging of the community of alien elements are of great moment in the development of the kingdom of God.

Consider, again, the obstacles overcome by Nehemiah. The high priestly rulers and nobles, intrenched in authority and wealth, were indifferent to the Deuteronomic provisions for worship and the welfare of the poorer members of the community. Many of these leaders, despite remonstrance and warning, continued to marry into non-Jewish families and so endangered the purity of language, blood, and religion. After the destruction of the city in 586 B. C., Ammonite, Edomite, Bedouin, and Philistine pressed in upon Judah. To what extent these neighbors occupied the territory of Judah in Nehemiah's day is not

clear. But the plans of Nehemiah to give the Jewish state "a place in the sun" awoke the hostility of these foreigners. Into this enfeebled Jewish community, yielding to the pressure of conditions in Palestine, Nehemiah came intent upon building up a compact, righteous, and rigidly Jewish state. It was no slight task. That he succeeded lifts him high among the heroes and leaders of the kingdom of God in Israel.

His contribution to Israel's religion wears at least four aspects: As the builder of the walls, the encourager of the repopulation of the city, and the upholder of strict separatist views, his governorship in Jerusalem was profoundly significant in the development of Judaism. Without a walled city there could be no check to the growing impurity of race and worship. It is apparent from these studies that the Babylonian Jews surpassed the Palestinian community in their purer and finer conceptions of religion. The vigorous rule and unflinching self-denial of Nehemiah prepared the way for Ezra and a stricter code by accustoming the Jews of Jerusalem to the deep sympathy and high ideals of the Jews of the dispersion. Then, Nehemiah again asserted the older prophetic identification of religion and ethics. Social justice again was enthroned as the soul of piety. Finally, his exhibit of generous, high-minded, self-reliant, courageous patriotism and his devotion to Jehovah, expressed in a life of prayer, loyalty to the Deuteronomic worship, and unstinted self-sacrifice in the working out of Jehovah's purposes for Israel, became a lasting benediction to the Jewish people. More than two centuries later Jesus ben Sirach, reviewing the fortunes of his people (Ecclesiasticus 49. 13), says of Nehemiah:

"The memorial of Nehemiah is great,
Who raised up for us the walls that were fallen,
And set up the gates and bars,
And raised up our homes again."

A BLUE PRINT FOR MODERN BUILDERS OF CIVILIZATION

A man is known by his enemies. Never to arouse antagonism

onism is never to produce results. "If it be possible, . . . be at peace with all men," is a Pauline injunction. It is not possible for a man of God to be at peace with all men. Progressives always arouse the distrust and wrath of conservatives. If you insist upon political righteousness, just courts, equitable distribution of the profits of toil, the abolition of the saloon, prostitution, gambling, and a corrupt theater, you will make enemies. Do not worry about them. Thank God that you have enough moral and spiritual vision and enough spine to make enemies of this sort. Greed is the chief enemy of the kingdom of God. Evils exist because there is money in them. Selfish grasping at wealth is the chief antagonist of human brotherhood. "To be ministered unto" is the chief motto of far too many who count themselves moral and Christian. This is not the motto of the Christ, nor upon it can be founded an enduring civilization. He who would be great in the civilization yet to come must be the servant of his fellow men.

This is the supreme, essential, and insistent lesson to be learned in the fashioning of great character: Self-renunciation is the one open door to immortality. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Jesus, Paul—what a galaxy of Jewish glory! Dare we forget that they won their kingdom by paths of heroic ministry, self-renunciation, the choice of a cause instead of the pursuit of a career?

How do men become the servants and the saviors of the world? What enables them to rise above petty and mean motives and ambitions? Is it not the inspiring consciousness of a holy cause? They believe in a program of God. They do not feel that the age—its beliefs and institutions, its good and evil—is final. Seeing this high purpose of God to lift the world into resplendent triumphs, they set themselves to the high cause that has glowed upon them from the love and will of God. Their lives and their labors become consecrated to his purposes. It is this consciousness of being God's servants which transforms them into man's saviors.

There is a vast deal of cowardice in life. Sin flaunts itself upon the streets, violates the laws, lays intolerable

burdens upon the poor, corrupts the patriotism of the wealthy and the educated; and the prophets who lift their protest are jailed or jeered. We need Nehemiahs: men in high position to champion causes whose opponents are entrenched in wealth, political position, and social prestige. Prosperity often kills the prophets, and social functions dig their graves. Men are afraid of a minority. They do not taste the joys of great individuality. Let someone with the genius of Milton arise to write another epic of rebellion. Let it not be the sad and distant story of an angel's revolt in heaven, but the sorrowful and tragic story of men and women in rebellion against ignorant and vicious custom and tradition. This poem should weave ivy around the brows of social meddlers, cranks, iconoclasts, and destroyers of special privilege; it should set crowns upon patriots, adventurers, discoverers, reformers, and apostles. It should sink into oblivion the human stumbling stones of progress. It should pass Dante's judgment upon the builders of ghettos, the defenders of caste, the priestly custodians of ignorant tradition, the fomenters of class hate and class struggles, and the selfish bullies who block the roads of liberty for the common man. This new epic of humanity should sing the heroism and the courage and the faith of the minority: the few in every age unto whom God whispers his purposes and into whose trustful and obedient souls he flashes bits of his coming golden day.

QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED

1. Under what conditions did Nehemiah resort to prayer, and to what extent did his praying contribute to his success?
2. Why was the building of the walls of Jerusalem so essential to the development of the religious life of the Jews?
3. Who were the chief antagonists of Nehemiah, and why did they oppose the fortification of Jerusalem?
4. Contrast the city of Jerusalem of 445 and 425 B. C.
5. Recall the statements made in Chapter IX concerning tithes, and state what changes have taken place concerning tithes. Why were the people now so reluctant to pay the tithe? What action in the matter was taken by Nehemiah?
6. What was the danger to Israel in the mixed marriages?

Estimate the success of Nehemiah in putting a stop to such alliances. How did others of the community view such marriages?

7. How do you account for the prevailing transgression of the law of Sabbath observance? What measures were taken by the governor to enforce the law?

8. To what extent in this period did the people resort to the Temple and participate in its ritual of sacrifice?

9. Aside from Nehemiah what individuals and classes of persons are leaders in the community?

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH LAW

IT will be recalled that the Deuteronomic Code, promulgated by Josiah in Jerusalem, 621 B. C., took precedence over the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21-23) and all other earlier fragmentary Hebrew laws. This code was regarded as the authoritative Hebrew code until the destruction of Jerusalem. Many of its provisions, being incompatible with the Exile, were disregarded for a time; but with the rebuilding of the Temple and the city this code again became the highest authority in the Jewish community.

Events during the fifth and fourth centuries seem to demand for their explanation the statement that among Babylonian Jews, beginning with Ezekiel and continuing to Ezra, there was a continuous process of codifying the ritual practices of past centuries and of the issuing of new laws. Not only were the exilic days bright with prophecy, but the priest also was active in setting forth in new codes the truths that the destruction of Jerusalem had brought home to him. By the time of Ezra, in the earliest years of the fourth pre-Christian century, the two collections of laws in the books of Leviticus and Numbers, now called the Holiness Code and the Priests' Code, were in existence, together with a historical setting narrating the origin of the Jewish people and their sacred institutions.

EZRA AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PRIESTS' CODE

There are no more difficult problems in Old-Testament study than the questions raised in the attempt to determine the facts of Ezra's mission and ministry. The importance of his work is generally recognized. More than any other he contributed to the development of legal religion, which

molded the life of the Jewish world for the last four pre-Christian centuries and which continues still to give Jewish thought its characteristic features.

Chapters 7 to 10 of the book of Ezra and 8 to 10 of the book of Nehemiah contain portions of the memoirs of Ezra. From the most reliable portions of these chapters it seems that Ezra, a Babylonian Jew, some time after Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem, disturbed by reports of the intimacy of the Jewish leaders with the Samaritans and feeling that the religious life of the Judæan Jews was not such as pleased Jehovah, obtained from the Persian monarch Artaxerxes II (405-358 B. C.) a firman, or imperial permit, to repair to Jerusalem, with certain privileges, in order to set the religious life in better order. Ezra 7. 27, 28, taken from Ezra's memoirs, indicates in general terms the Persian king's firman and Ezra's efforts to secure it. Pursuant to this imperial grant Ezra assembled quite a company of exiles at some point on the river Ahava (8. 15). Ezra 8. 15-29 is a further quotation from Ezra's memoirs. Upon the discovery that there were no Levites in the company Ezra sent messengers to the Jewish settlement at Casiphia, imploring the Levites to accompany the expedition. Several responded to this appeal. Since the Levites were the descendants of the country priests who were compelled to give up their positions at the time of Josiah's reform in 621 B. C., and because the newer legislation gave the descendants of the Jerusalem priests preference over these Levites, the latter were reluctant to return to Jerusalem, where this difference would be accentuated.

The journey to Jerusalem, undertaken without a guard (8. 22), required about three and a half months. See 8. 24, 25, 28, 29 for gifts brought from Babylonia and the care taken to deliver them faithfully. Ezra 8. 31-36 narrates the end of the journey, the delivery of the treasures into the hands of the Temple priests, and the sacrifices of thanksgiving offered for the safe arrival. Shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem, Ezra was informed that Levites, priests, and other leaders of the community had married

non-Jewish women. Ezra was overwhelmed at this disloyalty to Jehovah. Read 9. 1-11, 13-15 for Ezra's conception of the sinfulness of these mixed marriages. Note especially verse 7. What is Ezra's reading of his people's history? Chapter 10 continues the account. Just what part of this chapter is quoted from Ezra's memoirs has not been determined. The people in a great assembly appointed a commission to examine into these mixed marriages. One hundred and three men were found to have taken foreign wives. From them was exacted an oath that they would divorce these non-Jewish women. No statement is made that they did so. It was done, no doubt, in some cases. One other act attributed to Ezra seems quite probable. The event is narrated in Nehemiah 8. 1-12. According to this account Ezra read in the presence of a great assembly a book of law. The effect upon the people (Nehemiah 8. 9) was undoubtedly due to their fear of the penalty for their past disobedience. One gets the impression that this code of laws is now heard for the first time by the Judæan community.

What is the code that is now introduced into Jewish life? No answer free from objections ever has been given. But the most satisfactory supposition is that the code introduced by Ezra shortly after the opening of the fourth century was a collection of laws made up of what are now called the Holiness Code and the Priestly Code. Though a vast amount of difficulty attaches to the study of Jewish law, it is desirable that something should be known concerning these codes.

THE HOLINESS CODE

The group of laws known as the Holiness Code is found in Leviticus 17 to 26. This code was compiled during the Exile by some Babylonian Jew or group of such exiles. Without doubt it assembles the decisions of the priests at various sanctuaries and thus reflects ancient usage. At the same time it expresses the conviction that the broken harmony between Jehovah and his people, evidenced by the

Exile, can be restored only by the creation of a holy nation in whose midst the holy Deity will be content to dwell. Such sanctity of the nation can be secured only through a carefully guarded ritual of sacrifice at Jerusalem. This code was designed, like Ezekiel's code, to be used by the Jews of Judah and Jerusalem who had not been carried into captivity. The compiler and author may have hoped that its acceptance and use at Jerusalem would hasten the return of the exiles.

Leviticus 19 illustrates the method of the compiler of the Holiness Code. The chapter is made up of ancient decisions given by the priests at the sanctuaries, except verses 21, 22, with a few phrases added to give the point of view of the compiler. This chapter should be examined carefully. It has been called "a brief manual of moral instruction, perhaps the best representative of the ethics of ancient Israel." The author of the Holiness Code desires to secure the holiness of his people; and although he emphasizes ceremonial holiness (Leviticus 21. 16-24; 22. 3-9 and elsewhere), he also recognizes the necessity of right personal relationships to secure the commendation of Jehovah. In this code the teachings of the prophets are not wholly obscured. Keeping in mind the author's aim to point out the way of holiness, read carefully chapter 19 and list the moral requirements here demanded. What ceremonial paths to holiness are recognized in this chapter?

Observe that there are several holy things that the people are warned not to profane—namely: the name of Jehovah (18. 21; 19. 12; 20. 3); the various sacrifices (19. 8; 22. 15); the sanctuary (21. 12, 23); and the priesthood (22. 8, 9). To profane these things is to treat them commonly: to set aside their connection with the worship of Jehovah and to neglect to pay them the regard and reverence which Jehovah deserves from everyone. Two instances of the manner in which Jehovah's name may be profaned—that is, treated with discourtesy—are given in Leviticus 19. 12; 20. 3. It should be noted too that the Jewish people themselves are similarly holy: from

all nations they have been separated to serve the holy Jehovah (19. 2; 20. 7, 26).

THE PRIESTLY CODE

About the year 500 B. C. another collection, or formulation, of Jewish law was made, quite probably among the Babylonian Jews. This group of laws was set in a historical framework designed to relate the origin of Jewish religious rites and institutions. The purpose of this work, like the Holiness Code, was to win the favor and protection of Jehovah by raising up a holy people in whose midst he could dwell. It is not easy to fix precisely the limits of this code. Undoubtedly additions were made to it at least during the next one hundred years. This priestly writing, with its additions, however, is sharply enough set apart from other Pentateuchal material. Exodus 25 to 31 is a part of this Priestly Code. This section narrates the erection of an elaborate building for worship in the wilderness which was moved from place to place by the Israelites in their journeyings. If such a place of worship was constructed, it is strange that the books of Samuel and Kings, which sketch the history of the Hebrews from the time of the judges to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, make no mention of this Tabernacle. Neither do the prophets refer to it in any way. The worship of the Hebrews during all these centuries was not the worship such a structure required. The author of the Priestly Code regarded this Tabernacle as the only place where Jehovah was to be worshiped (Exodus 25. 8, 22 and 29. 42), and Aaron and his descendants to be the only legitimate persons to offer sacrifice (29. 44). But our studies have shown that until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. Jehovah was worshiped at many sanctuaries, and that no voice was lifted in condemnation of such worship until Josiah carried through his reforms in 621 B. C. Nor was the offering of sacrifice limited to the Aaronic line. It was not even the affair of priests alone. Thus, at every turn the student is met by the fact that the actual worship of the Hebrews for many centuries was

not the worship required by the Tabernacle described in Exodus 25-31, 40. The conclusion seems reasonable that the Tabernacle described by the author of the Priestly Code was his way of expressing an ideal of worship for his own time. His contemporaries must have so understood him. Our confusion in the matter could scarcely have been theirs.

Exodus 35-40 also belong to this code, but they add little to what is found in the previous chapters. Leviticus 1-16 and 27, together with Numbers 1-10; 15. 1-36; 16. 35; 19; 25. 6 to 36, include nearly the whole of the Pentateuchal legislation belonging to the Priests' Code.

THE CODE INTRODUCED BY EZRA

While the precise limits of the legislation introduced by Ezra are not known, the two codes examined above must have constituted the new body of laws now formally adopted by the Jewish community. The Holiness Code, accepted by the author or compiler of the Priests' Code, already was imbedded in the heart of the later document.

Not long after Ezra's mission ended, the whole Pentateuch took the form in which we have it now. According to Josephus, the only Jewish historian who fixes a date for the separation of the Samaritans from the Jews, this event took place at the time of Alexander the Great's invasion of Syria, about 330 B. C. Since the Samaritans possess the Jewish Pentateuch, the completion of the canon of the law occurred long enough before this date to give it sanctity in the eyes of the schismatics. Therefore, the priestly conception of religion, the essential characteristic of Judaism, was fixed little later than Ezra. Indeed, one may think of Ezra as having completed what Ezekiel had begun: the establishment of a theocratic people in whose midst the residence of their holy Jehovah was secured by an elaborate system of holy ritual.

THE MEANING OF HOLINESS

Holiness and Uncleanness.—In primitive religion little distinction is made between holiness and uncleanness. Re-

ligious persons, priests, chief or king, and those in some temporarily unique relation to society—for example, mourners, mothers at childbirth, warriors on a campaign, girls at pubertal age, homicides, lepers—have imposed upon them the same restrictions. There is something mysterious about them. Ordinary people shrink from them. Close association with their fellows would bring others into the same weird, uncanny, and dreadful condition. Such persons are dangerous: they must be secluded from the rest of the world; they are taboo.

This principle underlies much of the priestly legislation. Leviticus 10. 10 thus correlates holiness and uncleanness. The opposite of holiness is the common, and the antithesis of the unclean is the clean. Leviticus 6. 27, 28 shows clearly this intimate connection of holiness and uncleanness. The flesh and, especially, the blood of the sin offering are holy. But the earthen vessel in which this flesh has been placed must be broken, and any garment touched by this sacred blood must be washed. The holiness of jar and dress becomes their uncleanness.

Thus, holiness in its earliest usage has no moral significance; it means merely that the person or the thing counted holy is restricted from common use.

The Contagion of Holiness.—Holiness in the foregoing sense is contagious. It is a mysterious power that passes by contact back and forth between persons and things. Read Leviticus 6. 25-30, which describes the ritual of the sin offering for offenses in which the priests were not involved. The animal presented for such sacrifice is most holy. Whatever touches such flesh becomes holy by virtue of this contact. Leviticus 6. 11, 18 expresses the same idea. Uncleanness also is contagious (16. 15-19). Holiness, like uncleanness, unfits one for the ordinary activities of life; it is something to be guarded and to be guarded against.

Holiness and Perfection.—Holiness expresses the reservation of a thing or person for the use of deity. It thus includes the idea of separation from the ordinary activities. It is an easy transfer from this point to the idea

that persons and things set apart for divine use should be the best (Leviticus 7. 25). Since any person who had become unclean was barred temporarily from contact with his fellows, it followed that such a one should not approach the sanctuary (7. 21). These ideals are the moral turning point in the priestly conceptions of holiness. Jehovah requires the best to serve him: physically perfect priests and offerings. It was from this stage of thinking that Isaiah and the prophets took their lofty departure, and even priestly legislation thereafter could not wholly ignore the moral meaning of holiness.

Holiness and Morality.—It was the primary object of the author and compiler to fence Jewish life with such provisions for worship that no other deity than Jehovah should be adored, and none other than Jewish rites should be used. It was believed that such strict and reverential worship through a jealously guarded and conducted sacrificial system would win, in behalf of the Jewish state, Jehovah's unflinching favor. Therefore, the greater attention was paid to the ritual of worship. Yet this excessive emphasis of the cultus did not wholly obscure the moral meaning of holiness. The preaching of the great prophets was not wholly forgotten. Leviticus 5. 4-6; 6. 2-7; and chapter 19 inculcate some of the fundamental principles whose observance is necessary to achieve a stable civilization. It should be noted, also, that an injustice done one's fellow man is not merely a wrong done to a fellow mortal: it is also a sin against Jehovah. It is a violation of the very laws of the universe; it is an affront against God. To harm a neighbor thus becomes a tragedy that shakes the universe. The man who withholds the wages of an employee must reckon with God.

SUMMARY

Ezra's contributions to the religious life of his people were great indeed. He brought large reinforcements of zealous, pious Jews out of Babylonia and added them to the struggling Jewish community in Judah. He brought to Jerusalem a code of laws, some new and some old, de-

signed to secure the presence of Jehovah in the midst of his people. More than any other person he contributed to the development of that Judaism which weathered the persecutions of Persian, Greek, and Roman, and which, in the New Testament, becomes the starting point of Christianity. Ezra was the chief founder of Judaism—that empire of the spirit which, however much it is expressed in ceremonial laws, was able to survive the destruction of political states and which has survived until our own day.

Underlying every theory offered to explain the origin and meaning of sacrifices is the fact that man in and through them sought to relate himself more acceptably to God. First fruits and animal sacrifices alike were intended to insure for man a greater divine aid. In the code introduced into the Jewish community in Palestine by Ezra the slain animals were not regarded as substitutes for sinful men and women. There was yet no conception of man's eternal death or punishment to create the demand for a vicarious substitute. The ideas of the hereafter in the times of Ezra only faintly differentiated the lot of the righteous and the wicked in the world of the dead. Punishment for wrongdoing was confined to this present life. Various penalties—such as fines, expulsion from the nation, and death—were exacted from the guilty. The death penalty was ordered inflicted for contact with Jehovah's sanctuary by a non-Jew (Numbers 3. 38), desecration of the Sabbath (Numbers 15. 32-36), blasphemy (Leviticus 24. 16), human sacrifice to Molech (20. 2-5), witchcraft (20. 27), bestiality (20. 15), harlotry (21. 9), sodomy (20. 13), incest (20. 11-14), adultery (20. 10), and murder (24. 17). Since punishment for evil was regarded as being complete in this life, and since these lawgivers did not set aside the death penalty for certain crimes against the social order by any scheme of sacrifice, it is evident that animals slain in sacrifice were not regarded as vicarious substitutes for man. This limitation of the sacrificial system is further emphasized by the statements "that woman shall bear her

iniquity" (Numbers 5. 31) and "his iniquity shall be upon him" (15. 31).

But whatever the need and excellence of Judaism, it must be held that this legal religion is a distinct retrogression from the prophetic ideal. The highest piety does not now demand an immediate consciousness of God revealing continually his will; the ideal now is loyalty to a law. The immediate relation to God is gone. This priestly law also set equal value upon ceremonial and moral actions. Such valuation of moral conduct ends in the ruin of ethical life. If salvation depends on observance of this law, it follows that salvation belongs to Jews alone. Thus, at every turn this new legal religion is opposed to the ethical religion of the prophets. It would not have been tolerated by an Amos, a Hosea, an Isaiah, or a Jeremiah.

BRIDGES FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

Is it enough to be sincere and good? No kingdom building is possible without sincerity; but sincerity can tear down as well as build up. These Jewish legalists were sincere, but they reached back into the past and brought again to first importance in religion conceptions that the prophets had done their best to make forever impotent. With sincerity must go the unceasing effort to understand what will make the highest contributions to life. No man or age can travel forward worthily that faces the past adoringly.

Yet no man or age ever is wholly bad. These legalists have insisted upon the supreme obligation of religion—namely, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Likeness to God, not merely belief in God, is the supreme requirement. It is not so important to believe *in* Christ as to believe *like* Christ. When we begin to believe his beliefs, there will be born in us sufficient motives to regenerate the world.

What is the value of ritual in the development of life? Ritual demands no initiative, no thought, no vision, no intellectual or spiritual break with tradition. It does not foster change. It clogs the progress of the moral conquest

of society. It decries social reforms and political changes. It lives by a stand-pat creed. Yet Judaism, clinging to its ritual, has survived nineteen centuries of political annihilation; and Christian churches, with strong accentuation of ritual, wield powerful influence to-day. But is this influence not reactionary rather than progressive? Is it alive with leadership, or is it not rather leaden with the weight of a past whose curse they know not how to break?

In one respect this priestly legislation was highly ethical: It was never taught that these animals, slain at the altar, were a substitute for sinful man. With all their regard for ceremony they never prostituted their moral sense to utter that any man's guilt could be wiped away by a vicarious death. "Every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge" remained a live prophetic counsel through all priestly blundering.

These priests believed that holiness is contagious. So it is, although not in the sense described by them. Ethical holiness ever tends to awaken similar sanctity in other lives. If you live by the holiest ideals, if pure motives and noble sympathies govern your conduct, there is something infectious in such manhood and womanhood. The genuine variety is not dangerous; it is beautifully wholesome and imperatively necessary. Get close to God and you will catch it.

QUESTIONS

1. What is known of Ezra's personal history? What was his purpose in coming to Jerusalem?
2. Why was Ezra's caravan not accompanied by a royal guard?
3. What criticism is to be passed upon Ezra's historical perspective? See Ezra 9. 7.
4. What reforms were accomplished by Ezra?
5. What body of law was introduced into Jerusalem by him?
6. Discuss the origin of the Holiness Code. State where it is now to be found. What purpose moved its author and compiler?
7. When did the Priests' Code come into existence? Where is it now to be found? What was its author's object in describing so minutely the tabernacle?
8. What are holy things according to these codes? What

does it mean to profane them? Was holiness in the priestly sense desirable for a Jewish merchant or farmer?

9. What great purpose did the authors or compilers of these codes have in mind?

10. Compare the services rendered to Judaism by Nehemiah and Ezra. State the values of the rebuilding of the Temple, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the introduction of the Priestly Code for the development of Judaism.

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CHAPTER XIX

JOB: A STUDY IN JEWISH PIETY

PIETY is essentially faith in and reverence for God. The pious man is he whose life, regulated by a supreme trust in a God of goodness, moves on through struggle and calm, through defeat and victory, with its inmost confidence in the rightness of the divine administration of the world unshaken. Piety lies at the heart of religion. The creators of Hebrew religious life were pious men; and our studies of the prophets, the postexilic leaders Nehemiah and Ezra, and the authors of Jewish law have been studies in Hebrew piety. But the book of Job, with its poignant question of the place of evil in Jehovah's government, raises in a striking manner the question whether piety, whether religion itself, is possible in our world. It is a question that is never old and that has been raised at numberless crises in human affairs.

The author and the precise date of the book of Job are unknown. Previous chapters have shown a set of interests that preclude this philosophic drama from an earlier date than the fourth century before Christ. The introduction of the Priestly Code, with its assumption that Israel's failure to conduct a carefully guarded worship—the nation's neglect of holiness—accounted for its great disasters, undoubtedly provoked the line of thought found in Job. The narrow exclusiveness of this new legalism was met by the liberal protest of Ruth and Jonah. The book of Job also is a protest against this legalistic piety. Its author did not believe that a holy ritual could avert all evil. He did not understand the disastrous course of his people's life; he could find no explanation of evil in the orthodox opinions. But his faith in Jehovah, unimpaired by his philosophical confusion, held him steadfastly in supreme loyalty to his God. It is this piety that

is the charm of Job and that makes the book a rich treasure for the study and meditation of every age.

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

Pain and death ever have seemed to man needless and irrational elements in existence. They require explanation. The earliest answer of man to his own question of the function of suffering was that the gods, being all powerful, did what they pleased. Among the early Babylonians all human misfortunes were traced to the anger of the gods at some human deed. But in the great majority of cases, when misfortune befell men, they were ignorant of those deeds which had aroused the anger of the deities. The misfortune was the first intimation of the transgression.

“May the wrath of the heart of my god be pacified:
May the god who is unknown to me be pacified.
The misdeed which I have done I know not.”

This is a typical Babylonian prayer. There is no moral relation between misfortune and human conduct. In some unforeseen way the worshiper has aroused the ill will of some deity. He does not know even which one among the many is offended.

A modified form of this conception of the cause of misfortune is found in the earlier Old-Testament literature. In the midst of a great victory over the Philistines (1 Samuel 14. 43) Saul imposes a food taboo; Jonathan and his armor-bearer unwittingly break it and stand for this unwitting transgression in peril of their life. It was felt in Saul's day that a violated taboo aroused the wrath of deity. Similarly Uzzah (2 Samuel 6. 6, 7) violated a taboo in touching the ark. In neither case was the punishment involved related morally to life. It was simply due to a violation of divine prerogatives.

Time passed, and this nonethical interpretation of misfortune gave place to a moral explanation. The authors of the Deuteronomic Code believed that the practice of the humanitarian and ritual provisions there enjoined

would be followed by abundant rains, rich harvests, large flocks and herds, and numerous children. Prosperity is the reward of obedience, and calamity is the punishment for indifference and disobedience. In spite of the early death of the good king Josiah and the lifelong afflictions of Jeremiah the doctrine that righteousness secures prosperity and long life continued to be the orthodox doctrine of Israel through the Exile. Ezekiel (see chapter 18) makes this position clear.

But with the restoration of the Jewish community in Palestine, the rebuilding of the Temple and the walls, the introduction of the law, and the increasing strictness of Jewish life it was still found that men righteous according to the accepted standards suffered grievous afflictions, and men who were openly wicked often prospered through a long life. The question pressed upon at least one reflective soul with undeniable persistence. Why do the righteous suffer? is the query of the book of Job.

THE ORTHODOX VIEW OF SUFFERING

This was expressed, first of all, by Eliphaz. Read Job 4. 7-11. The theory that all affliction is the punishment of sin is stated flatly in verse 7:

“Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent?

Or where were the upright cut off?”

What proof does Eliphaz offer for this theory that calamities beset the wicked only? Note first (verse 8) that he cites what he believes to be an observable fact. Then (4. 12-21) he argues that man's position is so lowly before God that no man (verse 17) is really righteous according to the standard of deity. Even the angels are charged with folly. Before such exalted justice and purity every man stands condemned. Hence (5. 7) man should accept affliction as necessary and justifiable. Thus, Eliphaz explains the causes of misfortune which do not fall obviously under the rule stated in 4. 7, 8 by the theory that the right-

cous man is not absolutely righteous. But such afflictions of the righteous are intended to awaken a deeper trust and loyalty toward God. What does Eliphaz say he would do if he were in Job's place? (5. 8). Read the splendid lines (5. 17-27) in which Eliphaz assures Job that the fullest trust of God lifts a man above the main disasters of life and crowns him with a ripe and honored age.

Bildad repeats this argument, but with more direct application to Job's case. Read 8. 5, 6 for his brutal insistence that Job had sinned. Bildad supports his position by an appeal to the experience of the past. There is abundance of accumulated evidence, he thinks, that affliction besets the paths of those only who forget God. Zophar holds the same view as the two former speakers. He too exhorts Job:

"If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away . . .

Then . . . thou shalt forget thy misery . . .

And *thy* life shall be clearer than the noonday."

THE THEORY OF DISCIPLINE

Both Eliphaz and Elihu recognize that the older view is too rigid to explain the whole of misfortune. Affliction is more than punishment: it is intended to warn and restrain man from plunging on recklessly into irretrievable ruin. A man ought therefore to rejoice when suffering comes upon him. It is an expression of God's love and care. Thus, Eliphaz says (5. 17):

"Happy is the man whom God correcteth:

Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty."

Read also 22. 21-30 and observe that Eliphaz, in urging Job's repentance, maintains the opinion that the misfortunes befallen his friend are God's method of bringing Job into a better relation with himself. But observe too that he wavers not at all in his opinion that genuine righteousness is rewarded with honor and prosperity. Examine 33.

19-28. Here Elihu asserts that pain is God's voice to restrain man from sinful ways which lead him to an early death. To such men in affliction he sends his holy angels to interpret to the sufferer the meaning of his chastisement. Then the afflicted one, recognizing his sin and acknowledging it, is restored again to health. Thus, pain is God's messenger in the discipline of the soul.

THE THEORY THAT SUFFERING IS THE TRIAL OF FAITH

While the prose prologue does not enter intimately into the movement of the drama, it does present an explanation of the afflictions of the righteous. Read Job 1. 1-5 for a picture of Job's piety. From 1. 6 and 2. 1 it appears, in the author's view, that Jehovah is a heavenly Monarch surrounded by a host of angelic ministers and that, like a Persian prince, he held certain court days on which the heavenly officials presented themselves before their King. Each of these officials has his own task in the vast administration of the universe. Satan is a kind of inspector-general of our own planet. Job 1. 7 indicates the nature of his responsibilities. Observe the satisfaction Jehovah takes in Job (verse 8). But Satan avers that any man would be righteous were he to be favored with Job's prosperity, and that no man's piety really can be known until it is tested by the direst adversity. Jehovah does not think that this is true—at least not true in Job's case—and, to put the matter to the test, gives Satan permission to afflict Job except unto death. In 2. 10 the result is stated. This theory assumes that afflictions come upon the wicked to punish them, but those which befall the righteous are a fiery test to show the strength or the weakness of their character. That the author of the book considers this view unsatisfactory is seen in the fact that this solution does not enter into the thought of either Job or his counselors.

THE AGNOSTIC POSITION

This is stated first by Elihu. He says, in effect, that we

cannot really understand God: the greatness and unsearchableness of his ways render futile any questioning of his government. God is far removed from man. One fine result from his remove from mankind is that he is thus freed from the necessity of injustice: there is no motive for it, nothing to be gained by it (34. 12, 13); neither the praise nor the blame of men can affect his policy (34. 29; 35. 5-8); he has no need to play favorites (34. 17-20). Elihu does not admit that injustice is a part of the divine policy. He thinks that God's administration is just; but he does recognize seeming injustice and offers as its explanation that God's far remove from man makes human understanding of his ways impossible. What proof of this position does Elihu offer? See 36. 26-33; 37. 5-20. Rain, snow, lightning, winds, the expanse of sky, all evidence the far remove of God's life from human frailty. It is absurd to question or to murmur at his administration. We have so little in common with him that we cannot converse with him (37. 19); so majestic is he that "we cannot find him out" (37. 23).

Chapters 38 to 41 present the same position—that it is impossible to understand the method of divine Providence. These final chapters should be read attentively. They present the cares and responsibilities of God's government of the universe. Does this review of God's affairs belittle the problems of man? These speeches of Jehovah assume the correctness of Job's contention: that the affairs of men exhibit injustice, and life is filled with unexplainable suffering. But when the "why" is asked, the answer is that there is no answer: God's ways are past finding out. If a man is torn with a sense of injustice in the world, these final chapters say to him, "This restiveness, this sense of rebellion against God, is unjustifiable until all the aspects of his government are known to us. Since in the nature of the case this full perspective is impossible, man cannot justly murmur or condemn. We may not have full knowledge of his ways, but we can trust him, and in this trust we find sanity, strength, and peace."

THE SOUL OF JOB UNDER DISCIPLINE

Job himself, until his calamities befell him, had acquiesced in the orthodox theory. Now he realized that it broke down utterly. He knows that he is innocent. No great sins have stained his life. Read 16. 6-17 for Job's burning sense of the injustice done him on the theory that suffering is the punishment of sin. Then, too, Job's suffering has opened his eyes to the fact that the wicked are not invariably punished. Bildad had asserted (18. 5, 11, 17, 18):

“The light of the wicked shall be put out,
 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side,
 His remembrance shall perish from the earth,
 He shall be driven from light into darkness
 And chased out of the world.”

Chapter 21. 7-21 should be read carefully and attentively. Observe there the answer Job made to the claim stated in the foregoing quotation.

Job's faith falters under this new revelation of world conditions. There grows upon him the horrible feeling that the world is not fundamentally just and moral. He begins to feel that there is no longer an argument for righteousness. Elihu represents Job as saying despairingly and bitterly that righteousness does not get a man anything (34. 9; 35. 3). Chapter 24 should be carefully read. Here Job points out the ruthless tyranny of men of wealth and position versus (1-4, 9-12) the wretched life of the poor (5-8), the crimes of various evildoers (13-17), and asserts (18-25) that the fate of these men in no way differs from the end of others. There seems to be no moral government of the world.

Yet Job cannot rest in this awful pessimism. While he is sure that the old theory breaks down completely and while he is not able to put forward any tenable view of

his own he cannot feel that his helplessness to fathom the problem is the end of the matter. Read the magnificent outburst of faith in 19. 23-27. The precise meaning here may be uncertain, but the general meaning is clear. The present, with its insoluble problems, is not the end of the matter: there will come a day of understanding. Jehovah will vindicate Job, but not only Job: he will justify his own ways in the sight of man. So Job, although he cannot know fully, can trust. Read the two short replies of Job to the speeches of Jehovah (40. 4, 5; 42. 2-6). Observe that in the first half of verse 3 in chapter 42 and in 42. 4 Job is quoting the charge against him. He acknowledges that the ways of God are beyond him and so far as the problem of evil is concerned acknowledges that there is no satisfactory explanation. But concerning man's practical relation to the seeming injustice of the world Job discovers that all-confiding trust in the power and wisdom and justice of God is sufficient for everyday life.

THE CONDUCT INSPIRED BY SUCH PIETY

The book of Job is a protest against the ideal of righteousness held by the priestly legislation. In the Priests' Code righteousness primarily is a right attitude toward a ritual of worship; the ideal of righteousness everywhere in the book of Job is rightness of human relations. The right relation between men is here stated to consist in justice, in warm sympathy, in close bonds of consideration and affection, which hold society together in loving fellowship. Slavery and broad divisions between rich and poor are taken for granted; but piety demands that these social chasms shall be bridged with love and helpfulness on the part of the rich and strong.

Note the following catalogue of wicked acts—wickedness here is nearly altogether a ruthless and unsocial deed—which the man who despises God commits. There are the sins denounced by the Ten Commandments: murder, theft, adultery (24. 15, 16); forms of theft are specified (24. 2, 3); adultery is defined (31. 7, 9-12); miserliness

(31. 24, 25), rejoicing at the destruction of one's enemy (31. 29), abuse of power in dealing with slaves (31. 13), falsehood (31. 5), and deceitfulness (27. 4) are counted evil deeds. But for the most part wickedness is regarded as hard-heartedness toward the weak and helpless units of society—the orphan, the widow, the lonely childless woman, and the poor laborer. Observe carefully the wrongs that were done in Jewish society of this period toward the widow and orphan (22. 5-9; 24. 3, 9, 21; 31. 16-18, 21): the last ox of the widow, and a nursing child from its mother's breast were taken away to satisfy a ruthless creditor. Note the sorrowful picture of the tragedies of the poor (24. 4-12, 14; 29. 13; 31. 38, 39; 34. 28): hungry and thirsty in the midst of abundance, pitifully small wages, the continual victim of the greedy rich and corrupt judges, their last garment taken in pledge, so that they go about naked to work, and naked they shiver in sleep. The blind and lame, the sorrow-stricken, the hungry, and the stranger (22. 7; 29. 15; 31. 32) have no consideration shown them. It is this unhumane greed of power and wealth, this terrible breach of human fellowship which riches so often create, these yawning social chasms in democracy, which mark the lack of piety in human hearts. Once only is wickedness an irregularity of worship: The man who turns aside from Jehovah to revere the solar and lunar divinities (31. 26-28) is given over to iniquity. But the interest here is almost wholly an affair of social ethics. What constitutes righteousness? Social justice (29. 14). What is piety? It is that faith in God and reverence for his character and will which uphold man as a just and loving brother of his fellow men.

MAKING FRIENDS WITH JOB

What is the place of piety in religion? There is a vast emphasis in religious circles upon social ethics as the test of religious faith and devotion. There is a danger to religion in pressing social reforms. It is quite possible to forget the far-off issues in the tragic shadows of the

present hour. But when the distant interests, the issues of that unseen to-morrow, are forgotten, the motive to correct the abuses of to-day fades in the soul. Now, piety is the root of religion; it is essentially faith in God. Unless religion is first of all a deathless devotion, a holy lifting of the soul unto God to know his will and to rejoice in his fellowship, social religion is shorn of its life. Piety is the beating heart of religious belief, of religious institutions, of religious-social ideals. Do not, I beg of you, cease to keep your religion fervid with prayer and meditation.

Thus, piety's contribution to life is measureless indeed. The world demands from us a ceaseless struggle. Crushing burdens are laid on many lives. Again and again have tortured men and women, having lost the heart to breast the pitiless storm of poverty, sickness, and besetting sin, ceased to struggle and sought the shadows of the grave. There is only one unfailing source of spiritual power. To possess the soul with the sense of mastery, so that it rises birdlike above life's ills, is the gift alone of undaunted trust in God.

The faith of Job—what wonder is it that it is spoken of throughout the world! What a faith it was! To turn away from the legalistic piety of his day; to deny the orthodox explanations; to venture into the untraversed realms of thought; to find, at last, in God no explanation but silence; and then to trust, to believe that God, although he vouchsafed no justification of his ways to man, yet ruled justly: this is faith—wonderful, glorious, and redeeming.

Job's friends teach us the mockery of some of our friendships. Does our friendship for others mean this shallow, undiscerning, unsympathetic criticism offered as superior advice? No friendship is genuine unless it is an open gateway between human souls. Through this unbarred passage we enter each other's life and become comrades. It is impossible to misunderstand, to carp, to disparage, to condemn. To sit in judgment on one's friend is to draw the sword against oneself. Oh, for multiplied myriads of

human friendships to radiate the world with trust, love, beautiful words, and gracious deeds!

Again, we find that the prophetic type of religion reaches the heights. Legalistic piety gropes in darkness. The rosy dawn haloes the brow of Job. He is a prophet's soul. He speaks to God face to face; he needs no intermediary. With clean conscience he clutches the skirts of the Infinite One and asks for audience. Make way for him; he has an appointment with God.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. When was the book of Job written? To what class of literature does it belong? What great question does it seek to answer?

2. What is the Babylonian explanation of misfortune?

3. What is the Hebrew conception of suffering in the period of the early monarchy?

4. What explanation of calamity was offered by the Deuteronomic reformers of the seventh century?

5. What was Ezekiel's doctrine of suffering? How long was this doctrine held unchallenged?

6. State, by a quotation from this book, the orthodox theory of suffering. What explanation is given by Eliphaz to the apparent exceptions to the orthodox theory? What modifications of the traditional theory are made by Eliphaz and Elihu?

7. State the theory offered in the prose prologue.

8. What explanation seems to be the final opinion of the author of the book? Does this answer to the question of why the righteous suffer contribute to the development of piety?

9. What is the Christian explanation of the presence of evil in the world? What is the Christian teaching on the problem of the book of Job?

10. In what way does belief in Satan contribute to the solution of the problem?

11. To what extent did belief in immortality with rewards and punishments contribute to the author's plea for trust in God? (See 3. 13-19 for ideas of life after death.)

12. Since piety is faith in and reverence for God, what are the chief characteristics of God portrayed by this book?

13. What is Job's conception of a wise man? (28. 28). Commit to memory this verse.

14. Where does Job place the responsibility for his sufferings?

15. What elements in Job's piety are of present-day value?

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CHAPTER XX

JEWISH LIFE IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD

THAT no nation lives unto itself alone is amply illustrated in the history of the Jewish people. National feeling and action took their beginnings among the Hebrews while they were living in Egypt. On their entrance into Palestine they were influenced profoundly by the more developed civilization of the Canaanites. Phœnicia and Damascus lay close along the borders of the northern kingdom, and they continued to influence Hebrew political and religious life until they were supplanted by Assyria. The Babylonians took many Jews captive, and preceding chapters have shown how greatly the development of Jewish religion is indebted to these exiles.

In 538 B. C. the Persians fell heir to the vast empire of the Babylonians and Assyrians, and Cyrus and his successors swayed the East until they in turn succumbed to a more virile civilization. For approximately two hundred years the Jews were struggling to achieve their destiny under the suzerainty of these Aryans. It will be recalled that Cyrus made possible a return of Babylonian exiles to Jerusalem, that Artaxerxes I nobly acquiesced in the desires of his cupbearer Nehemiah, and that Artaxerxes II gave Ezra his opportunity to stamp legalism upon the Jerusalem community.

What further influence upon Jewish life resulted from the Persian control of Palestine? Were the Jews affected directly by Persian religious ideas? These are questions of much importance. This chapter is devoted to their answer.

THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

From the time of Isaiah the hope of a golden age for Israel continued to be a constant feature in Jewish life.

This hope more and more came to be associated with vast political disturbances in the nations and in the confusion and overthrow of those which held in check the political aspirations of the Jews. Cyrus was hailed by a prophet of the Exile as Jehovah's servant, and in the overthrow of the ancient Semitic Babylonia by the Persians and the Medes many Jews undoubtedly believed that there were to be seen the beginnings of that universal political chaos out of which the glorious Jewish state was to arise.

But the Persian succeeded in doing what neither of his Semitic predecessors in world empire had achieved. Darius came to the throne in 521 B. C. and during his reign he molded the heterogeneous elements of his extensive empire into a compact and regularly organized body. The vast areas subject to him were divided into twenty to thirty provinces—the number varied from time to time—and each was placed in charge of a governor, or satrap. This official was responsible for the collection of revenue, the administration of justice, and the maintenance of order. In each satrapy there were also a military commander and a secretary. These officials too were appointed by the king and were responsible directly to him. There were numerous military posts, garrisoned except in rare cases by Persian soldiers only, in all the provinces. The satrap was the "eye of the king." His task was to keep his sovereign informed concerning conditions in his province. The Persian sovereigns kept in close communication with even the most distant provinces by a chain of couriers maintained along the excellent post roads throughout the empire.

Under such a system Jewish expectations of world-wide political disturbances were almost wholly crushed. "All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest," was Zechariah's (1. 11) dejected statement. Consequently, the Persian domination, so systematically organized and maintained, silenced for nearly two centuries the Jewish expectation that a prince of the house of David should sit upon the throne of a gloriously restored and expanded Jewish state. Any attempt at Jewish national independence, any refusal to

pay tribute, any training of armies, any plot to displace the Persian undergovernor at Jerusalem, any hint at rebellion and a career of Jewish conquest, would have set in motion the mighty forces of the Persian Empire, and Judah would have been destroyed. No prophet could arise to predict an immediate interference on the part of Jehovah. The Persian was too securely established. The Messianic state had to wait for a more propitious age.

NEW DEVOTION TO THE TEMPLE

With political Messianism crushed or held in abeyance during the Persian period pious Jews turned more earnestly to the Temple and its services. We have studied already Nehemiah's establishment of an elaborate Temple ritual and the extensive sacrificial system inaugurated by Ezra. But in addition to the new devotion to the idea of atonement through sacrifice the religious aspirations of Judaism also expressed themselves in a considerable amount of devotional literature. This literature of devotion, being set to music, was introduced into the services of the Temple. The result was to diminish the crass effect of the sacrifices and to rally about the Temple many for whom the sacrificial conception of atonement was insufficient or repellent.

Temple Music.—Undoubtedly music formed a part of the acts of worship in Solomon's Temple. Since the chief services of religion among the Hebrews were festivals of feasting and general rejoicing, music formed a part of the acts of worship at all the sanctuaries. Songs and musical instruments appeared at these feasts (Isaiah 30. 29). So prominent was this musical feature in worship that Amos (5. 23) uses it to symbolize the whole sacrificial system which he denounced: "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." The Temple at Jerusalem undoubtedly continued this custom until the city was sacked by the Babylonians. After the Deuteronomic reform the services at Jerusalem naturally assumed greater importance and undoubtedly became more elaborate. Probably in the

closing years of the southern kingdom is to be placed the beginning of the custom of using professionally trained musicians in the religious services. No certain descriptions of these arrangements for music have come down to us. We cannot be sure what songs they sang and we are only partially aware of what instruments were used.

The matter becomes more clear after the Exile. At the time of Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 13. 10) there was a numerous company of professional singers who, because of lack of financial support, had gone to farming. Nehemiah restored the payment of tithes and recalled the Temple musicians to their tasks. Evidently a considerable use of music in the services of the Temple was a well-established feature in his time. It is probable that at the completion of the second Temple musical elements on a more elaborate scale became a regular feature of the Temple ritual. When Ezra arrived with the new law, and under his leadership the sacrificial elements in the ritual were greatly expanded, music already was thoroughly established as a large and integral element in the services of the Temple.

The Temple musicians associated themselves together in guilds. The earliest whose names have come down to us were the "children of Asaph" (Ezra 2. 41), "sons of Korah" (Psalm 42), and the "sons of Jeduthun" (1 Chronicles 25. 1). The members of these guilds were both players of instruments and singers. They accompanied the daily burnt offering and all other of the more solemn services with singing. They were their own accompanists. The instruments commonly used were cymbals; the nebel, or psalter; and the kinnor, or harp. The latter two were stringed instruments. The tunes were taken from old popular songs sung at weddings, harvests, and vintages.

Hymnbooks of the Temple.—During the Persian period the process of collecting, editing, and composing songs for the services of the Temple, if not begun at this period, was greatly stimulated by the need felt for a more spiritual religion than that involved in the sacrificial system. The strict legalists themselves felt the need of this music,

and the more spiritually minded found in the hymns an outlet for their longings. The first Jewish hymnbook was issued about the time of Nehemiah or Ezra. It was composed of Psalms 3-41, with the possible exception of Psalm 33. Psalms 51-72, with a few possible exceptions (for example, Psalm 60), were a second collection made during the continuation of the Persian rule. The Asaphite Psalms (50, 73-83) and the Korahite collection (43-49), although containing Psalms of the Persian period, were not assembled until after the Jews had passed through the deep waters of Greek persecution.

These two hymnbooks of the Persian period contained Psalms written earlier than the time at which they found their way into the Psalter. But their collection and use indicate the religious spirit of the period and reflect indirectly the Persian subjugation of Jewish national life.

While the dating of individual Psalms is exceedingly difficult, and while there is much difference of opinion concerning the dates of nearly all the Psalms, it does add to the interest of a Psalm to be able to attach it to some definite historical setting in Israel's life. Examine Psalms 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 17, and 22. These poems express the distress of pious Jews at the hands of worldly and arrogant leaders in their own community. But in the midst of suffering unjustly afflicted their faith in Jehovah sustains them, and they believe that he will break the arm of the evildoer and the wicked. Read in connection with these Psalms Malachi 3. 13-18 and consider whether the prophet's description of the dark years in Judah immediately preceding the advent of Nehemiah is not a satisfactory historical setting of these Psalms.

Read Psalms 8, 16, 29; 57. 5-11; and 19. 7-14. These Psalms also were produced in the Persian period and fairly reflect the devotional life, the type of piety, which obtained in the Judæan community shortly after the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra. They seem to indicate that these reforms were more or less permanent and were acceptable to the majority. The dissatisfaction and the difference of view expressed in Ruth, Job, and Jonah,

which also are voices of the Persian period, were not pronounced enough to shake the position of the Temple and its services in the affection of the people.

THE LAST YEARS OF THE PERSIAN PERIOD

Artaxerxes III, through a series of murders, ascended the throne of Persia in 359 B. C. During the reign of his immediate predecessors Persian control of the empire's vast territories had relaxed, and opportunity was given for revolt. Egypt threw off the Persian yoke, and the Phœnicians followed the Egyptian example. It is probable that Judah, as of old, was enamoured by the possibility of independence and refused the Persian tribute. Phœnicia and Egypt were defeated and punished with the utmost cruelty. The citizens of Sidon to the number of forty thousand shut themselves in their houses and set fire to their city rather than trust themselves to the cruel tortures of the Persian monarch. In Egypt, Artaxerxes demolished the walls of cities, plundered the temples, and, leaving garrisons to hold the country in subjection, withdrew with immense booty. From Josephus it is evident that a Persian force under Bagoas, one of the generals of Artaxerxes, severely chastised Jerusalem for its part in the revolt. Many Jews were taken captive and sold into slavery. Others were transported to the province of Hyrcania, to the south of the Caspian Sea.

This tragic event in Jewish history has left its mark in the book of Joel. Verses 9-17 in chapter three exhibit the spirit in which Judah dared to throw aside the Persian yoke. The spirit of nationalism and Messianic hope were awakened once more by the changing political events. The power of Persia seemed broken by the Egyptian revolt. It might well have seemed to the fervid religionists at Jerusalem that the long-awaited day of Jehovah's deliverance had come. Verses 4-8 are a fragment expressing the rude and cruel awakening from these dreams. The Persians came, and part of the punishment was the despoliation of the Temple. Phœnician merchants became the ready buyers of Jewish captives and such plunder as

the Persians were ready to sell. Possibly some of the Psalms were born in this time of bitter humiliation. But none can be placed at this period with absolute certainty.

OTHER RESULTS FROM CONTACT WITH THE PERSIANS

Persian officials, soldiers, couriers, and merchants were common in every part of the domains subject to the successors of Cyrus. The Jews living in various parts of the empire were brought into close contact with Persian life. In the Elephantine papyri there is a record of a suit at law between Mahseiah, a Jew, and Dargman, a Persian. Official documents prepared by Jews at Elephantine, an island in the Nile, and addressed to "Our Lord Arsham," the Persian satrap of Egypt, are still extant. There has been found also a petition by the Jews of the same city addressed to Bagohi, the Persian governor of Judah, who, in the absence of Arsham from Egypt, authorized the Jews at Elephantine to rebuild their Temple to Jehovah, which had been destroyed.

There is every warrant for believing that the religious ideas of the Persians penetrated into all districts reached by their political and military authority. In those communities where Persian religious ideas were more advanced than the native religions there is every reason to suppose that they were not without influence upon the subject peoples.

During the period under discussion (538-322 B. C.) Persian religious conceptions in some particulars showed more reflection and, therefore, were more satisfactory than were the Jewish. This is true especially of their beliefs concerning life after death. The Jews at this time held the views on the subject which were common to all the Semitic East. Beneath the earth was an abode for all the dead. Into this vast cavern good and bad went indiscriminately. See Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 32. 18-32. There was no teaching of retribution after death and no release from this gloomy underworld. Job. 3. 13-19 and 14. 10-12 express the same notion. If the author of Job raises

the question of a happier immortality (14. 14), the idea is held as a faint hope.

Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Persians, had clearly outlined beliefs concerning the invisible life. Individuals at death were judged, and their destiny was determined according to their thoughts, words, and actions in the present life. The good passed at once into the heavenly abode, and the bad were cast down into hell. At the end of the world was to come a final judgment. The bodies of the dead were to be raised and reunited with the spirits who once had tenanted them. The great and final judgment then took place. All evil was then to be destroyed, and the earth was to be renewed for the abode of the righteous.

To what extent did this Persian eschatology influence Judaism? In Daniel 12. 13 two characteristic Persian ideas appear. By this passage there is taught a resurrection of righteous and wicked and a final judgment following the resurrection. But this resurrection and judgment are limited. They do not apply to all mankind; they do not even include all Jews. It is possible that in the teaching of Daniel, Judaism began to be formally responsive to the Persian conception of the last things. In the second and first centuries before the Christian era a well-developed eschatology that almost completely paralleled the Persian doctrine appeared in the Palestinian apocryphal literature. The conclusion is inevitable that Persian ideas of the last things met a sympathetic response in the harassed Judæan community, and that the more pious were stimulated by these foreign notions to develop their primitive eschatology into a likeness of Persian doctrine and unite it with their Messianic hopes.

Practically the same course, though in a lesser degree, was taken by the development of the ideas of Satan, angels, a heavenly court surrounding God, and the spiritual rulers acting as satraps of Jehovah in the government of non-Jewish peoples. The ideas of nations being ruled by heavenly princes as underlords of Jehovah (Daniel 9. 21, 10. 13, 18-21) seem to have been modeled from the form

of government of the Persian Empire. The same conception appears in Psalm 82. These spiritual beings—demi-gods, they might be called—appear in other Psalms (for example, 86. 8; 95. 3; 138. 1), against whose high estate is manifested by contrast the greater glory of Jehovah.

SUMMARY

Continued study of the past makes ever more clear that in those far-off days, as in the present time, no nation lived unto itself. After the Exile the community in Jerusalem was guided by a succession of pious leaders, who did their utmost to break the contact of Jews with foreigners and to exclude from Judaism non-Jewish ideas. But when the day came that the appointment of the high priests was in the hands of Persian officials,¹ it is easy to understand that foreigners in Palestine, in the long run, directly and indirectly influenced the development of Jewish religion.

The Persians made possible the rebuilding of the Temple and the city; they permitted the return of influential Jews to the land of their fathers; their tolerance made possible a fairly prosperous Jewish community in Palestine. But their well-established control of Judah silenced its political Messianism and turned the attention of the Palestinian Jews to their Temple. This strict confinement of Jewish aspirations to religious ideas and activities formed the setting for the development of Jewish law, for new attention to the cultus, and for the new passion for psalmody. Persian political organization and religious beliefs more directly influenced the growth of Judaism and, in the ideas of judgment and resurrection, enriched Jewish religious life.

MODERN INFERENCES FROM PAST EVENTS

Of what and by whom is the life of an individual or a nation made? From what source have sprung the ideas that make us what we are? Whence have come our be-

¹ *Antiquities*, Josephus, xi, 7, 1.

liefs, the color of our emotions, and the decisions that are registered in deeds? How subtle and unfathomable are the ways in which an individual is influenced in every aspect of life! A terrific thunderstorm frightened Luther into becoming a monk; the terror of a pursued runaway slave led John Brown to vow eternal enmity to slavery; the sight of a criminal guillotined in Paris shook to its foundations Tolstoy's belief in the greatness of modern civilization; Sarah Bernhardt was diverted from the convent to the stage by a careless remark made to her mother by a friend; Matthew was transformed from a publican into an apostle by the Master's "Come." It is so in every life. A picture, a book, a song, a careless or an earnest word, a birth, a death, an accident—and our lives are turned into new paths, and we become different beings. We are influenced by everybody and everything; and we, in turn, influence the whole world. No individual lives unto himself. Our separate lives are really composite parts of the lives of all. Life is an endless process of give and receive. The Persians are ever with us.

How frequently the common and unclean are transformed into the beautiful and the pure! When the singers of the Temple were seeking tunes for their poems they found them among the songs in common use. Vintage songs, love ditties, and songs of revelry were robbed of their melodies, and these popular tunes began to be heard in the courts of the Temple. Psalm 22, from which Jesus quoted when dying, was sung to the tune of a hunting song: "The Hind of the Morning." Psalm 56, one of the oldest in the Psalter, was set to the music of a love song: "The Silent Dove." Psalm 8, one of the noblest of Jewish hymns, was sung to a wine song's music. Even tunes can be converted. Men and women whose lives are set to sin can be reclaimed from the vulgar and vicious and changed into sacred chants unto God.

The Psalms seem to have been written for all time. Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, cultured and ignorant, Oriental and Occidental, find in them the vehicle of their praises and their prayers. The Psalms are

the utterances of human souls crying out for divine aid and comfort. They are human voices—not Jewish; therefore, they are universal voices. Through the centuries they have been lifting themselves to God in the hearts of vast human multitudes. Martyrs, missionaries, merchants far from home, sailors at sea, soldiers in the thick of battle, kings on their throne, stout souls defying the tyranny of kings, mothers bending over their children, youths and maidens in their mating time, old men and saintly women facing the sunset, even our Lord at Calvary, have used the Psalms to unite themselves the closer with God. They are still our noblest expressions of worship. They are sufficient for the sage. They are beautiful on the lips of a child.

TESTS OF LESSON MASTERY

1. What nations influenced the Hebrews in different periods of their history?
2. Discuss the political organization of the Persian Empire.
3. What was the result of this political efficiency upon Jewish Messianism?
4. What use of music in Hebrew religion had been made previous to the Exile?
5. What led to a greater use of music in the services of the second Temple?
6. Discuss the guilds, instruments of music, and Hebrew tunes.
7. Describe the contents of the earliest Jewish hymnbooks.
8. What events in the Persian Empire and in Jewish history inspired the prophecies of the third chapter of Joel?
9. How closely were the Jews brought into contact with the Persians?
10. What were the views of the hereafter held by the Jewish contemporaries of Nehemiah?
11. What were the Persian views at this time?
12. To what extent was Judaism influenced by Persian religious ideas?

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CHAPTER XXI

THE JEWISH SAGE

WHEN Alexander set out from Macedonia with his armies for the conquest of Asia, a new epoch in the world's life began. The Greeks believed themselves to be the superiors of the Asiatics in the things that make civilization. It was natural for them to introduce into the lands of their conquest the familiar aspects of their life at home. By the year 332 B. C. the Greeks had wrested Syria and Palestine from the Persians. From this date until 63 B. C., at which time Jerusalem was captured by Pompey, and a Roman garrison policed the city, Palestine was profoundly affected by Greek civilization. Even the appearance of the Romans did not stop the process of Hellenization. Pompey gave many of the cities of Palestine their freedom and embellished them with new public buildings after the Greek manner. From the coming of the Greeks until a hundred years, at least, after the opening of the Christian era Greek civilization was the dominant influence in Palestine.

GREEK INFLUENCE IN PALESTINE

Since the Greeks had crossed into Asia not to ravage the country but to possess it, they caused to spring up a multitude of cities after the Greek pattern, into which were carried the ideals, the interests, and the manners of the homeland. No part of Asia was more Hellenized than Syria and northern Palestine. Throughout Galilee around the shores of Gennesaret and far across the Jordan arose numerous Greek walled cities, with colonnaded streets, stadiums, theaters, baths, hippodrome, and, sometimes, a naumachy. Mount Tabor, looking down upon the plain of Esdraelon; Sythopolis, guarding the plain at its entrance into the Jordan valley; at least Taricheæ and Ga-

dara by Galilee; Paneion at the sources of the Jordan; in eastern Palestine, Dion and Pella, the latter so thoroughly Greek that it was destroyed by the Maccabean prince John Hyrcanus; Gerasa,¹ Philadelphia on the site of Rabboth Ammon, Abila, Raphona, and, no doubt, many another—such are some of the cities built by Alexander's successors to spread Greek culture throughout the world. All these cities were within three days' journey of Jerusalem, and some of them were in sight of the Mount of Olives. Into these Palestinian cities—there were many others along the Phœnician and Palestinian coast—poured the tides of a new and attractive life. Interests, ideals, and feelings new to the Jew were dominant in these brilliant centers of life. They gave expression to that political activity, artistic feeling, and physical enjoyment so characteristic of the Greek and so foreign to the Jew. Festivals in which athletic games, horse races, and dramatic entertainments held dominating place offered the youth of Jerusalem an entirely new conception of life and the goal of human endeavor. The plays of Sophocles and Euripides, along with much inferior stuff, were enacted in these Palestinian theaters.

It was impossible that the younger and wealthier Jews should not respond to this freedom and exhilaration of Greek life. Greek culture offered a wider arena of life. So all those Jews—they were an increasing number—who aspired for either social position or higher mental endowments now turned to the Greek language, philosophy, and letters. Nor were they longer content to remain at home: the desire for pleasure, for commerce, for political advancement, for military service, for residence in Greek cities, for fertile lands, all combined to draw multiplied thousands of Jews into the Greek centers of Egypt and Syria. The attractiveness of this Greek life is revealed in the proposal to rename Jerusalem "Antiochia" and in the rededication of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim as the "Temple of Jupiter Hellenius."

¹ *A Syrian Pilgrimage*, Ascham, pages 89-94.

The rigid Judaism, grown up under Nehemiah and Ezra, could not wholly resist this freer Hellenic life, and there appeared under Greek influence writings called Wisdom Literature. The complex ceremonial and civil law that governed Judaism during the fourth century required not only the priest to conduct the ritual but also the scribe to teach the law. The near approach of Greek civilization attracted many scribes, not only to expound the Jewish Scriptures but also to observe and study universal moral and religious principles. Such scribes as were attracted by this universal moral truth are the sages. In Ecclesiasticus 39. 1-10 are stated the aim and function of the sage:

“He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients,
 And will be occupied in prophecies;
 He will keep the discourse of the men of renown,
 And be conversant in the dark sayings of parables;
 He will serve among great men,
 And appear before him that ruleth;
 He will travel through the land of strange nations,
 For he hath tried good things and evil among men.
 He will apply his heart to resort early to the Lord that
 made him,
 And will make supplication before the Most High,
 And will open his mouth in prayer,
 And will make supplication for his sins.
 The Lord shall direct his counsel and knowledge,
 And in his secrets shall he meditate.
 He shall show forth the instruction which he hath been
 taught,
 And shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord.
 Many shall commend his understanding,
 And so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted
 out.
 Nations shall declare his wisdom,
 And the congregation shall tell out his praise.”

Compare with this ideal of the sage's function in society the meaning and the need of wisdom given in Proverbs

1. 2-7. This prologue states the purpose of the collection of proverbs that make up the book.

This wisdom literature includes the Old-Testament book of Proverbs; several Psalms, such as 73, 92, 103, 104, and 107; Ecclesiastes; and the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus (or Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach) and Wisdom of Solomon.

THE TEACHING OF THE SAGE

Concerning Human Conduct.—Read Proverbs, chapter 2;

4. 13-19. Note that it is man's supreme duty to seek wisdom as he would search for hidden treasures; and if he does so crave to understand life he will learn that man's highest virtue is obedience to the moral law. This theme is amplified and illustrated in succeeding chapters. Chapter 5 is a warning against sexual licentiousness. Chapter 6 points out the evils of idleness, lying, theft, adultery, and murder. Other parts of the book are warnings against dishonesty (10. 9), mischief-making (10. 10), hate (10. 12), slander (10. 18), pride (11. 2), stinginess and avarice (11. 24-26), social pretense (13. 7), anger (14. 17), bribery (15. 27), use of wine (20. 1), quarrelsomeness (20. 3), fraud (20. 17), gossip (20. 19), filial impiety (20. 20), oppression of the poor (22. 22, 23; 10. 11), gluttony and drunkenness (23. 20, 21), perjury (25. 18), boastfulness (27. 1, 2), jealousy (27. 4), greed (27. 20). These vices are pointed out many times over, and their antithetic virtues are the evidence of wisdom. Similar vices and virtues are the themes of Ben-Sira (Jesus, Son of Sirach). This author of Ecclesiasticus anticipates James in saying:

“Be as a father unto the fatherless,
And instead of a husband unto their mother,
So shalt thou be a son of the Most High.”

Likewise, in other forms of rich human sympathy man shows his wisdom:

“Be not wanting to them that weep,
And mourn with them that mourn.”

Then, too, prayer and almsgiving are the marks of wisdom:

“Be not faint-hearted in thy prayer,
And neglect not to give alms.”

For the sage, sin has little or nothing to do with ceremonial law. The wise man is not he who follows with devotion the Jewish ritual of worship, but he who practices the great moral virtues. Here, again, as in the great prophets, righteousness becomes a greater thing than the correct practice of a cult: it is the exaltation of truth, justice, integrity, sobriety, and humanity to supreme place in human conduct. The man who does these things will stand right with God. Ben-Sira sums up the advantage of the pursuit of moral truth in his fine saying:

“Strive for the truth unto death,
And the Lord God shall fight for thee.”

In this new emphasis upon wisdom virtue and knowledge become practically the same thing. The sinner is a fool; the observer of moral law is wise. The bad man is bad because he will not seek instruction. “Wisdom will not enter into a soul that deviseth evil,” writes the author of Wisdom of Solomon. After cataloguing the sins of wicked men the same writer thus accounts for their evil purposes:

“Thus reasoned they, and they were led astray;
For their wickedness blinded them,
And they knew not the mysteries of God.”

Compare with this the identification of wisdom and righteousness in Proverbs 8. 8. So in this new turn of Jewish thought wisdom is regarded as the one thing needful. Let a man become wise, and all goes well.

Concerning Wisdom as a Divine Attribute.—The Priestly Code held up Jehovah’s holiness, meaning by this his separateness from man, as the chief element in his nature. The prophets emphasized his justice, righteousness, and love. The sages put forward wisdom as the outstanding characteristic of deity.

(a) *Read carefully Proverbs 8. 22-31.* Observe that Wisdom here asserts her primeval origin before Jehovah set about the creation of the world (verses 22-26) and that she was present at the creation of the earth, rejoicing at Jehovah's work and being his continual delight (27-31). Wisdom is here represented as a personal being, the first-created companion of the Most High. It is a poet's way of asserting that wisdom is the supreme attribute of deity and affirming that God's providence is characteristically marked by wisdom.

(b) *Ben-Sira teaches, similarly, that wisdom is the glorious distinction of God's nature and providence:*

"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
 And covered the earth as a mist;
 I dwelt in high places,
 And my throne is in the pillar of the cloud.
 Alone I compassed the circuit of the heaven,
 And walked in the depth of the abyss.
 In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth,
 And in every people and nation I got a possession.
 He created me from the beginning before the world,
 And to the end I shall not fail" (Ecclesiasticus 24. 3-9).

(c) *In Wisdom of Solomon (7. 25, 26; 8. 1) the same assertion occurs that wisdom is the supreme meaning of God:*

"Wisdom is a breath of the power of God,
 And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty;
 She is an effluence from everlasting light,
 And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
 And an image of his goodness.
 She reacheth out endlessly with strength unabated,
 And ordereth all things graciously."

The author of this book goes further. Wisdom is not only the active principle of divine Providence in nature but it is the Spirit of God himself passing out into human life and uniting men unto himself:

“Wisdom, from generation to generation passing into holy souls,
 Maketh men God’s prophets and friends;
 For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth with wisdom” (7. 27, 28).

“She entered into the soul of a servant of the Lord,
 And withstood terrible kings in wonders and signs.
 She rendered unto holy men a reward of their toils;
 She guided them along a marvelous way,
 And became unto them a covering in the daytime,
 And a flame of stars through the night” (10. 16, 17).

Universalism.—*There is little stress upon Jewish laws, institutions, and hopes.* There is no mention of Israel in Proverbs. According to Ben-Sira wisdom is manifested preeminently in Jewish law (24. 8-23), and the priestly dues are obligations upon the wise man. But the wise man is much more than a legalist. The great moral virtues, found in every nation, are the equivalent of Jewish ritual:

“He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour;
 And he that giveth alms sacrificeth a thank offering”
 (35. 2).

In Wisdom of Solomon this universalism is carried still further:

“Thou hast mercy on all men, because thou hast power to do all things,
 And thou overlookest the sins of men to the end they may repent.
 For thou lovest all things that are,
 And abhorrest none of the things which thou didst make;
 For never wouldest thou have formed anything if thou didst hate it.
 And how would anything have endured, except thou hadst willed it?
 Thou sparest all things, because they are thine,
 O Sovereign Lord, thou lover of men” (11. 23-26).

(b) *This universal religion is seen in the sage's conception of sin and the means for its forgiveness.* Recall what is said above concerning human conduct and compare the conception of sin here taught with the idea of sin expressed in Chapter XVIII. Here there is no ceremonial sin. All sin is the rejection of wisdom and the pursuit of the well-recognized immoral acts of life. The sage possesses a finer sense of the ground of the forgiveness of sins. Observe in the foregoing quotation from Wisdom of Solomon that Jehovah needs no sacrifice to put him in a forgiving humor: his great power and love are sufficient motives to move him to receive mercifully his repentant children. This movement of the sage away from the sacrificial ritual of legalistic Judaism is a splendid vision of the true nature of God and of religion.

A DEPOSIT SLIP FOR THE SPIRITUAL SAVINGS BANK

Better than gold is the knowledge of God. This is a fundamental truth for the wise man. Do you believe this? Do you really believe that the kingdom of God is more worthy of your thought and enterprise than the pursuit of wealth and fame? Are the invisible interests of the soul of greater moment than the visible needs of the body? If we are creatures who outlast time and who, by virtue of this spiritual immortality, cannot hope to find comfort and life in the world of things, do we not need far more deeply than we hitherto have understood the help of a Being who is lifted high above the pettiness and the meanness of our lives, above our ignorance and sin, whose will, in spite of our blindness and rebellion, dominates the world? A retreat we must have in the realms of the spirit to save us from the littleness and misery into which the strife for things ever plunges us. God is man's primary need.

In religion wisdom is a primary need. Men do not purposely seek wretchedness, misery, and sin; all men are pursuing happiness. It is the lack of lofty discipline and direction in the habit-forming years which distorts so woefully the conception of satisfaction held by the vast ma-

majority of mankind. Could the young man who lifts the first glass of beer to his lips see himself mirrored as a penniless outcast, ragged, filthy, blear-eyed, cursed by society, he would shudder at the foaming drink as at leprosy or a mad dog. The girl who harbors the first impure thought never pictures herself a woman of the streets. The task of evangelizing the world is the task of teaching the world where the goals of happiness lie. Do you recall the moan of Guinevere?

"Ah, my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known,
It would have been my pleasure had I seen,
We needs must love the highest when we see it."

Tennyson speaks true. There is a divine necessity within us to love the highest that we know. Make it your solemn duty to search for the highest, the purest, and the holiest, and count it your unescapable duty and divinely given opportunity to exhibit the highest that you know in the sight of your fellow men.

Does God know? How often that question has flamed within us. We are tempted, burdened, assailed, defeated. Do we struggle alone? Is the sky without an ear? Are the heavens blind? We know that the universe is strong. Again and again we tremble before its power. Earthquake and storm, disease and death, make us well aware of a power outside ourselves shaping our destiny. Is this Being wise and good? How we have raised the question in the midst of a dreadful overwhelming of our hopes and plans! There is one answer only which steadies us and gives strength and peace: *God is wise*. The universe has no blind alley for him. He never takes his hand from the wheel. He knows the course. He sees the far-off harbor. O thou vast outbound soul, fearful of the night, shrinking from the storm, keep the wise God steersman of thy life, and thou shalt make the harbor safe at the silver dawning of the morning.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is meant by the Persian period in Hebrew history? the Greek period?

2. What was the ambition of the Greek conquerors of Asia?

3. Name some of the Greek cities of Palestine? What public buildings were essential to every Greek city?

4. What particular feature of Greek life was expressed by the gymnasium? the theater? the stadium, hippodrome, and naumachy? (Consult the dictionary.)

5. Was the appeal made by these aspects of Greek life necessarily evil?

6. Did the Greek, in this emphasis upon physical enjoyment, art, and politics, have a real contribution to make to the Jew of the fourth and of the third century before Christ?

7. What motives impelled the younger and wealthier Jews to respond to the appeals made by Greek civilization?

8. What necessitated the rise of the Jewish sage?

9. In the quotation from Ecclesiasticus 39. 1-10 point out the preparation of the sage. Observe that he becomes conversant with the products of past wisdom, he visits the great men and the courts of foreign lands, he is a student of the social conditions of his day, he seeks forgiveness of sins from God and that instruction which he alone can give. Note next his mission in the world and the honors that come to him.

10. Examine also, in a similar way, the prologue to the book of Proverbs (1. 2-6), and point out the preparation and the mission of the wise man. What is said to be man's first step toward wisdom?

11. What writings constitute this wisdom literature? What is an apocryphal book?

12. Examine Proverbs 2. 1-4 and state the prerequisite to wisdom which the sage here insists upon? Note that wisdom, first of all, is a definite and earnest purpose to search for wisdom. What is promised in verse 5 to such an earnest inquirer? Observe that here "the fear of Jehovah," "the knowledge of God," and wisdom are identified. The student will recall Hosea's demand that Israel should know Jehovah. To know Jehovah is to realize his ethical character and his moral demands from men. The sage, like the prophet, regards the conscience and reason of man, not a body of law or a cult, as the true place of God's revelation of his ethical character and the duties that his moral nature imposes upon man. "We have here, on the one hand, the recognition of the mind of man as a source of truth and, on the other hand, the assertion that the moral potency of the mind is the creation of God."

13. In the light of the foregoing statement what do the words "Jehovah giveth wisdom" (verse 6) mean?

14. Of what benefit is this wisdom to man? See the remainder of the chapter.

15. What is the meaning of sin to the Jewish sage? What is the relation of righteousness and wisdom?

16. What does the Jewish sage add to the Hebrew conception of deity? Estimate the importance of this contribution to theology.

17. To what extent does the natural world give evidence of this wisdom?

18. Is wisdom in Proverbs 8 and in the quotations from Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon anything different from the wisdom spoken of in Proverbs 2? What new function of wisdom is described by the author of Wisdom of Solomon?

19. Why does the sage not emphasize the beliefs, ideals, and institutions peculiar to the Jew? Why does he preach no Messianic kingdom and expect no Messiah?

20. What elements in his teaching were making for the overthrow of Judaism? What aspects of his beliefs about God and man were preparing the way for the teaching of Jesus?

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

The Religion of Israel, Smith, Chapter XVII.

A History of the Jewish People, Kent, pages 271-322.

Jerusalem, G. A. Smith, Volume II, pages 367-418.

Jerusalem Under the High Priests, Bevan, pages 1-68.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MACCABEAN CRISIS

JEWISH religious history is a series of crises. The Exodus, the rise of the monarchy, the division of the kingdom, the crushing of Tyrian Baalism, the threatened fall of Samaria, the birth of ethical prophecy, the sack of Jerusalem, the rebirth of the Jewish state in the legalism of Nehemiah and Ezra, all evidence that the religion of Israel ever was subjected to excessive stress and strain. The Maccabean age is another period of trial and victory. This chapter sets forth the nature of this crisis and its contribution to Judaism.

MACCABEAN POLITICAL HISTORY

From 168 B. C., when the aged priest Mattathias began to revolt against the Syrian kings, until 63, when Palestine fell into the hands of Rome, constitutes the Maccabean period of Jewish history. The preceding chapter pointed out the aim of the Greek princes who got in control of Palestine through the victories of Alexander the Great. Believing in the vast superiority of the Hellenistic views and practices of life, they devoted themselves to the spread of this Greek civilization throughout all the provinces of the empire. Although Judah was the slowest of all the provinces of the Syrian kings (their capital was at Antioch, the Antioch from which Paul set out on his missionary journeys) to respond to the allurements of Greek life, in the course of time there arose a party friendly to the Greeks. By 168 B. C. this party embraced a majority of the leading Jews.

At this time Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king, determined to force an immediate Hellenization of Judæa. He proposed to abolish the Jewish worship and to establish, instead, the Greek religious rites. There were

not wanting prominent Jews who were willing to abandon the characteristic features of their religion. Those who favored the proposals of Antiochus seized the government in Jerusalem. A gymnasium was erected near the Temple, and the young men of Jerusalem threw themselves heartily into the new life of which this building was the expression. Even the priests were to be seen oftener in the gymnasium than in the Temple. Many of the athletes sought to remove the traces of their circumcision. Such was the progress toward the Hellenization of Judæa from 174 to 168 B. C.

Then Antiochus began to carry out his plans in earnest. He sent an army to Jerusalem, threw down its walls, killed or sold into slavery very many of its inhabitants, brought in Greek colonists, and built a citadel to hold the people in subjection. Jerusalem was made a Greek city. Upon the site of the ancient place of Jewish sacrifice a Greek altar was set up, sacrifices were offered to Greek deities, and the Jews were compelled to participate in Greek religious festivals. Throughout Judæa the observance of Jewish worship was forbidden on pain of death. Circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath were special points of Greek attack. Officers were sent into all the Jewish towns to see that sacrifices were offered to the Greek gods.

When the royal officer came to Modin, a town forever memorable in the annals of religion, an aged priest, Mattathias, was urged to submit to the king's decree and offer the heathen sacrifice. He refused. When a renegade Jew stepped forward to take his place, Mattathias rushed forward and struck him down beside the pagan altar and slew also, in the next moment, the royal commissioner himself. Thus having lifted the standard of revolt, Mattathias, with his five sons and some others, fled into the mountains. When the news of this brave deed spread through the land, other like-minded Jews flocked to Mattathias; and these forces swept up and down the land, overturned the Greek altars, put to the sword many of those Jews who had renounced their religion, and enforced the observance of

Jewish worship. It is impossible in this space to narrate the details of the struggle in which these noble leaders engaged with the Greeks to defend Judaism against the encroachments of Hellenism. Here only it may be said that Judas, who took up the work of his father and who was called Maccabeus (a word that probably means "the hammer"), is one of the great heroes of Jewish history; that Jerusalem was wrested from the Greeks and Jewish worship restored; that, finally, the citadel was captured; that the high priesthood was secured in the Maccabean family; and that, through the heroism and devotion of the Maccabees, Judæa finally won its independence from the Syrian kings, and, after six centuries of vassalage, the Jews once more became an independent state. The independence of Judæa was recognized by the Syrian kings in 143 B. C.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

It was in the midst of this Greek persecution, 167-165, in the judgment of most scholars, when the book of Daniel was composed by an unknown Jewish writer. Its purpose was to encourage the faithful Israelites to remain steadfast in Jewish practices and beliefs and withstand unto death the Hellenizing attempts of Antiochus Epiphanes.

First, the author assembles the examples of other Israelites who have endured great trials for their faith and their triumphs through their constancy; secondly, he assures his distressed countrymen that deliverance is near at hand. This deliverance, the author believes, will be a miraculous intervention on the part of God in the affairs of nations, that the Greek Empire will be annihilated, and that God will give his faithful servants in Judæa the sovereignty of the world. He believes, indeed, that the Messianic age is immediately at hand.

Read chapter 1. The author, by his story of Daniel's refusal to eat meat, seeks to encourage his countrymen to abstain from meats prepared by the Greeks. To eat of food forbidden by Jewish law, especially in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, was a striking evidence of apostasy.

Such meats were almost sure to have been offered as sacrifice before partaken of as food. Hence, the eating of such meats, as in Paul's day, was a species of alien and idolatrous worship. Chapter 1 is thus an exhortation to be true to the law. Greek civilization considered itself superior to the life of other nations. Those Jews who yielded to its allurements likewise so regarded the eminent value of Hellenic culture. Chapter 2 refutes this idea by exhibiting the superiority of Hebrew wisdom over the boasted Chaldean Magians. The four kingdoms are the Chaldean, Median, Persian, and Greek. All these shall pass. Note especially the words in which the rise of the Messianic kingdom is described (2. 34, 35, 44, 45).

Chapter 3 is designed to encourage the Jews to cling steadfastly to their own religion. Its truth is worthy of loyalty unto death. Keeping in mind that, under the bitter Antiochean persecution, Jews were apostatizing on every hand, the passion of this author is the better understood, and his mission valued. Observe (3. 17, 18) the sublime faith and courage of the faithful Jews in the darkest months of the Maccabean crisis.

Chapter 4 is to show the utter helplessness of heathen powers before the true God. As Nebuchadnezzar, because of pride and arrogance, was humbled from his high position, so Antiochus Epiphanes will be reduced to mean estate. The Jews who are loyal to Jehovah need fear no earthly prince.

In chapter 5 the author, using current popular accounts of the fall of Babylon, encourages his countrymen in their crisis. Belshazzar lost his kingdom because he profaned the Temple vessels that were carried from Jerusalem to Babylon. How much more, then, is the implied argument, shall Antiochus Epiphanes lose his throne for his destruction of the Temple walls and his erection of a heathen altar upon the site of Jehovah's sanctuary!

Chapter 6 inculcates that death is better than apostasy. It is the duty of the Jews to observe their religion under all circumstances.

The four beasts of chapter 7 are again the four king-

doms—Chaldean, Median, Persian, and Greek. Note especially the description of the Greek Empire (7. 7, 19-21). The ten horns are various Greek kings—the successors of Alexander the Great. The little horn (7. 8) is Antiochus Epiphanes. Note especially the words about him: “a mouth speaking great things.” Observe too the summary in 7. 25 of the Hellenizing efforts of this same Greek king. Especially attend to the predicted end of the Greek Empire. God himself, the “ancient of days” of verse 9, sits in judgment. What is the end of the Greek dominion? (7. 11, 26). Examine carefully all that is said about the new kingdom that is to arise (7. 13, 14, 18, 22, 27). Note that the “ancient of days” gives the world sovereignty to “one like unto a son of man” (7. 13), and to “the saints of the Most High” (7. 18, 22, 27). These saints of the Most High are of course the faithful Jews. Hence, “one like unto a son of man” and “the saints of the Most High” are identified. There is here a Messianic people; not yet a Messiah. Observe the extent of this kingdom in space and time.

Chapter 8 is a further description of the Greek kingdom. The “he-goat from the west” (8. 5) is Alexander the Great. The four horns of 8. 9 are the four kingdoms into which Alexander’s vast empire split after his death. The little horn (8. 9) again is Antiochus Epiphanes, whose violation of the sanctuary at Jerusalem is mentioned in 8. 11. The author promises that this profanation of the sanctuary at Jerusalem shall last a little more than a thousand days. It is believed that Greek sacrifices were offered upon the Jewish Temple altar from December 15, 168, to December 25, 165 B. C.

Chapter 9 is another approach to the author’s chief contention that the dawn of the Messianic age is at hand. Jeremiah (25. 11; 29. 10) indicated that the Babylonian Exile would last seventy years. The author of Daniel evidently supposed that Jeremiah meant that the Messianic era, at the end of the predicted period, would be ushered in. Therefore, he interprets these seventy years as seventy weeks of years, since the kingdom of their hopes has not

yet been realized. See 9. 24-27. Verse 27 states that Antiochus Epiphanes shall afflict the Jews for seven years, and that for half this period Jewish worship at Jerusalem shall be cut off. Since the author writes during this period of interrupted worship, it is clear that he looked for God's intervention within the space of three or four years.

Chapters 10. 1 to 11. 39 are a survey of the Judæan world from the beginning of the Persian period to the first years of the Maccabean revolt. Chapter 11. 40-45 predicts the end of Antiochus and, with him, of the Greek kingdom. The author feels that this is the end of the present world order. At this time will come a world judgment (see above). Observe that it is "a time of trouble" (12. 1); that the judgment is preceded by a resurrection of those preeminent in good and evil from "the dust of the earth" for their appropriate rewards (12. 2, 3). Those who have distinguished themselves in neither way remain in Sheol.

MACCABEAN PSALMS

There was no period of Israel's history more fitted than the Maccabean age to rouse the people into religious song. In no previous calamity of the nation had the people suffered a religious persecution from their conquerors. Jewish worship during the Exile was not circumscribed by Babylonian interference; but now the ancestral beliefs and practices, the divinely appointed worship, believed since the days of Nehemiah and Ezra to be the only means of preserving the Jewish nation in covenant relation with Jehovah, are assailed by Antiochus Epiphanes with all the influence and resources of the Syrian-Greek Empire. Added to these crushing foreign antagonisms, within the little nation itself there was a growing number of Jews who were advocating the laxity and even the abrogation of many of the requirements of the law. It was a time to try the faith of earnest souls and to wring a cry of protest against these destructive tendencies and an impassioned appeal to Jehovah not to forsake his afflicted people. There is an increasing tendency to include a

greater number of Psalms in this Maccabean period. With very few exceptions Psalms 44, 74, 79, 83 are universally assigned to this terrible period of stress and trial. Psalms 33, 60, 88, 119, 125, 129, 144, 149 are other compositions considered by many to have arisen from this same age.

Read Psalm 74 in the light of the desecration of the sanctuary at Jerusalem by Antiochus and the subsequent uprising. This Psalm was likely composed between 168 and 165 B. C. Note in verse 1 the feeling that their terrible disasters are due to God's own discipline. The psalmist reminds God of the insolent desecrations of the Greek and points out that these Hellenizers are his adversaries. In verses 4-8 are given details of the Greek violation of the Temple. A wail of despair characterizes verses 9-11. In verses 12-17 the author encourages himself with reflections upon the might and majesty of God. The Psalm ends in a plea that Jehovah will rescue his own from their afflictions. Notice the appeal to the covenant (verse 20) and the characterization of the faithful and oppressed Jews as God's "turtle-dove," "thy poor," "the oppressed," and "the poor and needy."

Read Psalm 79. Here too (in verses 1-4) is a little picture of the desecration of the sanctuary ordered by Antiochus. Note the details: the entrance of the heathen within the Temple inclosure, the overthrow of the city, the great slaughter of the inhabitants, the unburied corpses, and the scoffing and mocking of the conquerors. In 1 Maccabees 1. 20-40 and 2 Maccabees 8. 2-4 witness is borne to the faithfulness of the picture drawn by this psalmist. Again these afflictions are viewed as penalty (Psalms 79. 5-9). There is also a plea for Jehovah's help to withstand and overcome their adversaries.

Psalm 119 also is Maccabean. It was written in the midst of great trouble, afflictions, and persecutions. See verses 28, 50, 61, 161, and many others for expressions of the deep distress of those who remained faithful to Judaism under the Hellenic persecutions. The author is indignant at the Hellenized Jews who have apostatized (verse 53). Persecution has drawn him nearer to the law and taught

him its value (61, 71, 75, 92). He is conscious of no wrongdoing to merit these afflictions (121): his troubles are persecutions. The law had become his delight. "Oh how love I thy law!" is a recurrent mood (97, 113, and many other verses).

SUMMARY

Although only a part of the Maccabean history is here presented, and only a part of the religious literature has been examined, enough has been brought forward to evidence the importance of these stirring times for the development of religion. Greek civilization may not have had much to offer to Judaism, but we have seen in the preceding chapter that it did stimulate Jewish thinkers into new conceptions which enriched the religious life of mankind. Here too, by way of reaction, came new faith and devotion to God. Also, there was more clearly outlined the Messianic hope. From this time on it does not dim again. Through the courage and devotion of the Maccabees the law introduced by Ezra was more firmly fixed in Jewish life. Religion came to be identified with observance of law. Since this law was largely ceremonial regulations of life—an affair of festivals, sacrifices, tributes to priests—, it is necessarily regretted that such heroism contributed to the crowding out of Israel the moral visions and obligations of prophetic teaching. Yet nothing less than this rigid legalism could have survived the attacks of the Hellenizers. Without this heroic loyalty, which risked everything dear to man and which preserved and accentuated legalistic piety, nothing of Israel's glorious idealism would have survived the bitter persecution of the Greek kings. Judaism, with its profound regard for its institutions, its heroic sacrifices for them, its very life centered in them, prepared the way for the high demands of Jesus that God's kingdom must be first of all in the interests of man.

IN FELLOWSHIP WITH JUDAS MACCABEUS

Judas Maccabeus is one of the world's heroes. It is well for us to know such men. "We cannot look, however

imperfectly, upon a great man without gaining something from him." So Carlyle would have us give a kind of worship to heroes. We ought to have our heroes. A man without them is poor indeed. Unless there are brave and lofty-visioned men and women unto whom you look with admiration and a quickening of the soul you live an impoverished life. Judas Maccabeus is worthy of your regard. Religion was the supreme fact for him. It was more than a quiet home, prosperous fields, fair words from his neighbors: it was wine to his soul, and under its exaltation he forgot *things*; he lived in the realms of the spirit. He threw himself at wretched odds against the materialism of his day and won gloriously. Get acquainted with Judas Maccabeus.

The Maccabees have taught us that religious truth is worth dying for. Men are ever ready to perish for the visible. Few of us volunteer to put all in jeopardy for the ideal; yet it is in this way alone that we enter into life. He that loses his life is the only person who ever finds it.

It is curious that so much of the world's finest work is done anonymously. We do not know the author of Daniel nor of these Maccabean psalms. Yet this is always the spirit of great work. The doer of an ideal deed is not concerned with himself: he cares only for the immortality of his deed. Great souls never labor for the perpetuity of themselves. They are careless of fame. So deeply concerned are they that their work shall go on blessing the world that they never plan for the permanency of themselves. A man's true fame lies in his deeds.

The author of Daniel believes that earth's events are the shadows of heavenly realities. The clash of earthly kingdoms is the reflex of the conflicts of patron angels of these nations. This is a crude picturing of a great truth. The meaning of our human struggles is not exhausted in the play before our eyes. Earth's affairs are bound intimately with the processes of the invisible and spiritual world. I like to believe that every aspect of my life must be run back to God for its final meaning. This

is a God-controlled world; it is not a frightful maze of warring finite wills. Through the pain and crash, the bitterness and the struggle, of our lives, Almighty God is working out for us a glorious discipline of soul. We can trust him. This world is no blind alley for him; it is an open thoroughfare to his own clearly perceived goal.

Let us, then, learn to trust him. Let us, too, be brave. Let us never swerve from the great religious convictions. Let us learn to die for the truths of God. Let us make the kingdom real and glorious by crowning it with our loyalty and devotion unto death. Let us not permit ourselves to be swerved from duty, from the church, from Jesus Christ, neither by the sneers nor by the blows of a shallow, worldly, egotistic culture. Let us stand by the Christ even if we stand in the gloom and the pain of his cross. By and by we shall stand with him in paradise.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is meant by the Maccabean age?
2. What results were secured in Jerusalem by the Greek princes in their efforts to Hellenize the provinces of their empire?
3. What new Hellenizing policy was adopted by Antiochus Epiphanes? What was done at Jerusalem toward the carrying out of this policy? What was the king's plan for the country towns?
4. Where did this policy first meet resistance? In what manner?
5. Who were the leaders of this revolt against the Greek king? What was the nature of their successes?
6. What was the condition of Judæa in 143 B. C.?
7. What canonical book was probably written in this period? What was the purpose of its author?
8. What reasons did he offer his persecuted countrymen for withstanding Antiochus Epiphanes?
9. What did he intend to teach by his account of Daniel's refusal to eat the food provided by Nebuchadnezzar?
10. What was this author's reply to the boast of the Hellenizers that Greek culture was superior to Jewish ideas and beliefs?
11. How did he illustrate his belief that Jewish institutions were worthy of sacrifice unto death?
12. How did he argue that Antiochus Epiphanes was not to be feared?

13. What end did this author predict for the Greek kingdom? What future did he believe belonged to the Jew? In what manner was the Jews' deliverance to be achieved? When did he expect this glad relief?

14. What are this author's beliefs about angels? concerning life beyond the grave?

15. Why was the Maccabean age likely to produce devotional poetry?

16. What Psalms are thought to have been written in the Maccabean age? How many of these Psalms have you read in connection with this lesson?

17. What impression do they make upon you with regard to their faith and trust in God?

18. Do you consider that great affliction and great faith are likely to go hand in hand?

19. In what ways do you consider that the Maccabean struggle for religious and political liberty contributed to the progress of the kingdom of God?

WORKS OF REFERENCE

1 Maccabees.

A History of the Jewish People, Kent, pages 323-40.

Jerusalem, G. A. Smith, Volume II, pages 419-68.

Daniel, Driver, in "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." See the Introduction, pages ix-cvi, and also the commentary for difficult passages in the text.

CHAPTER XXIII

JEWISH RELIGIOUS PARTIES

IN THE New Testament Judaism presents itself in at least two well-defined sects, or parties, whose existence deeply molded and colored early Christian history. Yet these parties, Pharisees and Sadducees, were not a new rift in Judaism in the days of Jesus. They have an interesting history and a paramount influence in the political and religious life of Judaism for two centuries preceding the advent of Christ. This chapter discusses the origin of these parties, presents their leading religious beliefs, and estimates their contribution to the development of the kingdom of God.

THE SADDUCEES

The student will recall that from the earliest appearance of Hebrew law the priests were its custodians and interpreters. Three separate codifications arose in the course of Hebrew and Jewish history: the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Priests' Code. Each of these seemed sufficient in its day. But the formulation of a new code witnesses to the insufficiency of earlier legislation to meet the changing conditions of society. With the introduction of the Priests' Code, under the guidance of Ezra, this process of formulating new written codes ceased. However, this last code, so given over to ceremonial law, could not keep pace with the developing needs of the Jewish state. At least as early as 300 B. C. this situation was clearly felt, on the one hand, by the scribes—priests who gave themselves more to teaching and explaining the law than to conducting the ritual of worship—and on the other by the leading priests, who, by virtue of their religious headship of the Jewish community, were forced more and more into political position

by the necessity of the Jews to treat with the Greek kingdoms of Egypt and Syria. In the two previous chapters we have seen something of the appeal of this Greek civilization to the Jewish mind. Now, it was the Jewish aristocracy—the rich, priestly families who had come into the political as well as the religious headship of the postexilic community—who responded to the allurements of Greek life. The insufficiency of Jewish ceremonial law to satisfy life's fullest needs the more aristocratic members of the Jewish community sought to meet by a set of worldly, political, and universal interests. They took a deeper interest in the world immediately at hand. This is the characteristic feature of the Sadducean party.

Undoubtedly the Maccabean uprising crushed out the extreme Hellenists among the Jews. But when the Jewish state won its political independence under the Maccabees, and on under the Romans, there was an influential number of wealthy families, chiefly among the priests, who, though they subscribed to the law, held fast to their worldly and universalizing views. They subscribed willingly enough to the law laid down in the Pentateuch, but they had little patience with the new views, which were becoming more and more authoritative among the Pharisaic scribes. It was this class, the aristocrats, who, upheld by wealth and position, were inclined to find this world a good place to live in and who, feeling the narrowness of Judaistic legalism, supplemented it by seeking something of the liberalism of the Græco-Roman civilization (which surged even into Jerusalem), which came to be known as Sadducees.

Examine carefully the following concerning the Sadducees, taken from Josephus:

“The Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances which are not written in the law of Moses. For this reason the Sadducees reject them and say, ‘We esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers.’ Concerning these things great disputes and differences have arisen among them. The Sadducees are

able to persuade none but the rich, but the Pharisees have the multitude on their side" (*Ant.*, *xiii*, *10*, *6*).

"The doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies; nor do they regard anything besides what the law enjoins them. But this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those of the greatest dignity" (*Ant.*, *xviii*, *1*, *4*).

"Ananias was of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders" (*Ant.*, *xx*, *9*, *1*).

"The Sadducees suppose that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil and they say to act what is good or what is evil is man's own choice. They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul and the punishments and rewards in Hades" (*Wars of the Jews*, *ii*, *8*, *14*).

There is to be found in the Book of Enoch a section written by a Pharisee which gives something of the Pharisæic opinion of the Sadducees at about 90 B. C. Note attentively the following lines:

"Woe to you, ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches,
Ye have committed blasphemy and unrighteousness.
Woe to you who requite your neighbor with evil,
Woe to you, lying witnesses
And to those who weigh out injustice;
Woe to you, sinners, for ye persecute the righteous.
For ye shall be delivered up and persecuted because of
injustice.

"And heavy shall its yoke be upon you.
Woe to you, ye sinners, for your riches make you appear
like the righteous.
Woe to you who devour the finest of the wheat,
And drink wine in large bowls,
And tread under foot the lowly in your might.
Woe to you who drink water from every fountain,
For suddenly shall ye be consumed and wither away,
Because ye have have forsaken the fountain of life."

From these quotations it will be seen (1) that the Sad-

ducees were a party of aristocrats, men of wealth and position, mostly priests given over to the sensual living and the oppression of the poor which ever characterized the upper classes in Israel; (2) that they considered only the written law binding—that is, the Pentateuch as we now have it; (3) that they clung to older religious views with regard to the resurrection and angels, denying both; and (4) that they parted with the older view that every act of man, good and bad, was divinely directed, and emphasized the freedom of the human will.

THE PHARISEES

In another way did many Jews supplement the Ezra legislation. The continued failure of the postexilic Jews to set up a Messianic kingdom at Jerusalem led to a theological development in two directions. It seemed to those scribes who reflected upon these successive disappointments that Jehovah had withdrawn from immediate supervision of the world and given over earth's sovereignty to angels: to superhuman beings intermediate between God and men. Then, too, the sufferings of those who were loyal to the new order of life which followed after Ezra seemed so terribly to arraign the divine government of the world. Job's problem was greatly accentuated in the earliest Maccabean period. Hence, there appeared, as a logical necessity, the belief in a new society in which the persecuted righteous of the present world order would be rewarded for their faithfulness. Since death comes to many who ought to share this happier day, they must be resurrected from the gloomy Sheol and restored again to the light and joy of day.

The foregoing tendencies came to a climax in the bitter persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. We have seen that Hellenism made deep inroads into the priestly aristocracy of Jerusalem. In other circles, especially among the poor in the city and in the country villages, in reaction against the Hellenized Jews there were aroused a more ardent piety and a loyalty to Jewish beliefs and practices.

These were known as Chasidim, "the godly ones." Enough prominent Jews cast in their lot among them to give them the organization of a party. When the Maccabees raised the standard of revolt, the Chasidim rallied around them. In the first stage of the conflict with the forces of Antiochus their intense devotion to the law was exhibited in their refusal to fight or to defend themselves on the Sabbath. The troops of Antiochus having assailed a company of a thousand men, women, and children on this sacred day, these pious Jews, rather than break the law, raised no hand against the Syrian forces but stood with silent resignation until the last one was cut down. When the Maccabees secured religious liberty, these Chasidim were satisfied and for a time were alienated from these champions of political liberty. For a brief period under John Hyrcanus, who was regarded as a prophet and who held the office of high priest and was called a king, the Chasidim, or Pharisees, gave their support to the Maccabean party. Again there followed a period of distrust and alienation until Alexandra occupied the throne. She made peace with the Pharisees. From this time on affairs were largely in their hands.

There is a considerable body of literature coming from the Chasidim, or Pharisees, which makes clear their beliefs:

Psalms.—There are many Psalms in our present Psalter which were written in the Greek and Maccabean periods and which express the beliefs, the fears, the hopes, and the piety of the Chasidim. Among these Psalms are 44, 60, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 86, 88, 94, 109, 129, 143, and 144. These Psalms should be read in the light of this historical period. Examine especially Psalms 82 and 94. In 82. 1, 2, 6, 7 is seen a characteristic Chasidic and Pharisaic belief. The prologue of the book of Job and the prophecies of Zechariah have familiarized us with the conception of a heavenly court. Various writings of the Greek and Maccabean period enlarge upon this angelology. Daniel 10. 13, 20; 11. 1 assumes a belief in a patron angel for each nation. The prince of Persia is the patron or

guardian angel of Persia. Michael is the guardian angel of the Jews. The gods of Psalms 82. 1 are these guardian angels. In 82. 6, 7 it is asserted that these patron angels shall perish. The author of this Psalm, like the author of Daniel, believes that the destinies of nations are bound up with their patron angels. So when the psalmist predicts the destruction of the angels of the nations that have oppressed the Jew he is affirming in the most emphatic manner the overthrow of the nations themselves. Psalms 82. 3, 4 is a little cry for help which reflects the sorrows of the early Pharisees.

Read also Psalm 94 for an insight into the sorrows of the Chasidim, or early Pharisees. Observe verse 7 for a characteristic Sadducean belief. In what way does this Chasidic poet answer the teaching that Jehovah is far removed from the knowledge of man's ways? See 94. 12-23 for the strong faith of these persecuted Jews in the midst of dire calamities.

The Book of Enoch.—The Book of Enoch is a collection of Chasidic and Pharisaic writings dating from 190 to 64 B. C. There are several characteristic ideas:

(a) *The origin of evil is due not to man's transgression but to the lust of angels.* "And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men." There were about two hundred angels who took human wives. The offspring of these unions were giants. The immediate result of these marriages was a flood of godlessness. The giants themselves perished fighting each other. After their death their angelic fathers were imprisoned to await the day of judgment. At the death of the giants their souls became the demons who go about the earth to cause every form of evil. To them are due the vast pains and sorrows of mankind.

(b) *Angelology.*—The Book of Enoch revels in angels. "I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times

ten thousands, I saw a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood before the Lord of spirits." The cherubim and serapim of the older literature are now considered angels. There are seven archangels: Uriel is the overseer of the natural world, Raphael is in charge of the departed spirits of mankind, Raguel is prince of the stars, Michael is the angelic patron of the Jews, Saraquel rules the spirits of mankind who continue to sin, Remiel is in charge of the resurrection, and Gabriel is over paradise. Then there are angels over the sea, hail, hoarfrost, mist, and rain. In addition to Michael seventy angels are the shepherds of Israel. The Pharisees had no thoroughly worked-out system of angelic rule. The foregoing is only typical of the vast functioning of the angels in the universe according to Pharisaic thought.

(c) *Retribution, judgment, and resurrection.*—There were pronounced Pharisaic views concerning these, but they will be dealt with in the next chapter.

(d) *These writers in the Book of Enoch had clear moral vision.* Compare the following with many of the Psalms:

“And now I say unto you, my sons, love righteousness and walk therein;
 For the paths of righteousness are worthy of acceptance,
 But the paths of unrighteousness shall suddenly be destroyed and vanish.
 Seek and choose for yourselves righteousness and an elect life,
 And walk in the paths of peace,
 And ye shall live and prosper.”

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.—This book was written by a Pharisee between 109 and 106 B. C. At this time John Hyrcanus was at the front in Judæan affairs. “The Maccabean dynasty had now reached the zenith of its prosperity, and in its reigning representative, who alone in the history of Judaism possessed the triple offices of prophet, priest, and king, the Phar-

isaic party had come to recognize the actual Messiah. But the main value of the book lies not in this province but in its ethical teaching, which has achieved a real immortality by influencing the thought and diction of the writers of the New Testament and even those of our Lord. This ethical teaching, which is infinitely higher and purer than that of the Old Testament, is yet its true spiritual child and helps to bridge the chasm that divides the ethics of the Old and New Testament."¹ Consider closely the following remarkable passage:

"Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile; and if he repent and confess, forgive him. But if he deny it, do not get into a passion with him, lest catching the poison from thee he take to swearing, and so thou sin doubly. And though he deny it, and yet have a sense of shame when reproved, give over reproving him. For he who denieth may repent so as not again to wrong thee; yea, he may also honor thee and be at peace with thee. But if he be shameless and persisteth in his wrongdoing, even so forgive him from the heart and leave to God the avenging."

Meditate also upon this exalted path of ethical conduct:

"If a man prospereth more than you, do not be vexed, but pray also for him, that he may have perfect prosperity. For so it is expedient for you. And if he be further exalted, be not envious, remembering that all flesh shall die; and offer praise to God, who giveth things good and profitable to all men. Seek out the judgments of the Lord, and thy mind will rest and be at peace."

The student will recall that the Gospels unite the love of God and the love of one's neighbor as the sum of the commandments. These two paramount duties of religion already were conjoined nearly a century and a half before our Lord summed up the commandments for the scribe who questioned him (Mark 12. 28-33): "Love the Lord and

¹ *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Charles, pages xv and xvii.

your neighbor (Test: Issachar 5. 2). Issachar further declares (7. 6):

“I loved the Lord with all my strength;
Likewise also every man with all my heart.”

Also, Dan advises (5. 3):

“Love the Lord through all your life,
And one another with a true heart.”

There is a beautiful spirit of universalism in the Testament. Consider the following:

“If ye be darkened through transgressions, what, therefore, will all the Gentiles do living in blindness? Yea, ye shall bring a curse upon our race, because the light of the law which was given to lighten every man, this ye desire to destroy by teaching commandments contrary to the will of God.”

Speaking of the Temple, this author writes:

“And the twelve tribes shall be gathered together there, and all the Gentiles until the Most High shall send forth his salvation.”

THE ESSENES

At least a century before the Christian era there arose among the Jews an ultra-Pharisaic sect known as Essenes. Of them Philo writes:

“They are preeminently worshiping servants of God. They do not sacrifice animals but study to keep their minds in a saintly frame. They reside in villages, shunning town life on account of the lawless manners of town-folk. They do not treasure up silver and gold. You would not discover among them any maker of arms or war engines, any one busied in the slightest with military avocations. There is not a single slave among them. None ventures to acquire any private property at all. They dwell together in one place and pass their whole time in managing every kind of business for the common good. They are taught piety, holiness, justice, the management of affairs, citizenship, the knowledge of what is

truly good or bad. Thus, they furnish thousands of examples of the maintaining of love to God by a close and continuous purity maintained through life."

Josephus also felt the charm of this Jewish monasticism: "They despise wealth, and their socialism is remarkable: you cannot find any of them who has more than his fellows. They never buy or sell among themselves. They are peculiarly scrupulous in matters of piety. Before sunrise they never speak a word about profane matters. They work assiduously until the fifth hour, when they gather in one spot and, clothing themselves in linen veils, take a cold bath. They enter the dining room pure as they would enter a sacred precinct and take their seats quietly. No one is allowed to partake of food until the priest offers a prayer; and after they have breakfasted, he prays again. After this they lay aside their garments as sacred and resume their tasks till evening. Before one is admitted to this order he takes fearful oaths: first of all to be pious to the Deity; then to practice justice toward men; never to injure anyone; always to hate the wicked and to side with the just; at all times to show fidelity to all men, and particularly to those in authority, for no one acquires power apart from God; never, if he is in power himself, to vaunt his authority or to outshine his subordinates in dress or finery; always to love the truth and to denounce liars; to keep his hands free from theft and his soul from unhallowed gain."

There were several thousands of these Essenes during the days of the ministry of Jesus. They constituted a truly monastic order. Since they did not marry, their ranks were recruited from those who were weary with the individual conflict with the world. They were a truly noble group of men, with an exalted though limited social and ethical vision in the midst of bitter social evils. Of them Josephus writes further: "The Roman war showed what great souls they all had; for, though racked and twisted, burnt and mutilated, and subjected to every instrument of torture to make them blaspheme their Legislator or to eat forbidden food, they stoutly refused to do

either; not for a moment would they cringe to their tormentors or shed a tear, but, smiling through their anguish, they scornfully laughed at their tormentors and cheerfully gave up their souls to receive them once again."

SUMMARY

A careful study of the foregoing material reveals the diversified life of Judaism during the two centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. This period by no means is impoverished in kingdom development. During these two hundred years the Messianic beliefs, the doctrines of judgment and the future life, the vast complex of angelic functions, the finer ethical ideals, and the social gropings toward brotherhood which meet us in the Gospels were taking shape and making it possible for Jesus to win disciples for his kingdom of God. Although legalistic Judaism was triumphant through these centuries, it is evident that within the boundaries of this legalism the spiritual and ethical was ever overflowing the materialistic and the ceremonial. Two other important Pharisaic writings, the Book of Jubilees and Psalms of Solomon, there is no room to examine. It will be a splendid day when all this literature becomes familiar to the Christian student.

FIRESIDE THOUGHTS AND THEMES

The author of the Testament of the Patriarchs believed that men are saved in the process of achieving noble character, and not through outward ordinances; that salvation was not a shift from hell to Paradise, from fire to flowers, but in the change from envy, hate, and lust to good will, love, and purity; that it was not in the vicarious sacrifice of an animal or a man, but in the death of the mean and little within a man's own soul. This author would say that salvation is in character, and that in the deepest sense no man can save another, but every man must save himself. How much truth is in this thinker's position?

The same writer says that sin is anything that breaks

up fellowship. He believes that men are to live in glad and just fellowship with each other and with God. Anything that interrupts this open communion of soul is sin. Forgiveness is the healing of this ruptured fellowship. A bitter word, a theft, a sense of superiority, the spirit of envy, often divide men who ought to be brothers into strangers. Whatever makes fellowship impossible between men living near together is sin, and no man is sinless who lives with a broken fellowship waiting for his consent to heal it.

Is socialism possible in any satisfactory form? Have not these Essenes shown us at least some elements of the perfect social order? Everybody, except the sick and the infirm, worked at some useful employment. The rewards of toil were shared alike by the community; there was no heaping up of vast amounts of privately owned capital. They were intensely religious: a common meal was a sacrament. They were obligated to justice, truth, and purity. They had nothing to do with war. Work, brotherhood, and religion were the foundations upon which they built their order. What aspects of their life is it possible to reproduce to-day?

After the destruction of Jerusalem the Sadducees disappear from history. Is this because their primary interests were politics? or because they believed that death ended all? or for both reasons? Somehow life is almost never lived sublimely apart from belief in the immortality of the soul. It takes this belief in continued existence to lift life above the trivial and the mean in human affairs. Do not let the immortal hope die down in you. Do not think that this world is the best world for you. If you wish to be great, you must keep your soul dreaming of the eternal dawn and the endless day.

Think of the struggles through which our dearest treasures have been won. Our ideals of political and religious liberty are blood-stained by myriads of martyrs. Our ethical ideals, our democratic dreams, our hopes of immortality, have been baptized with Pharisaic blood. They were the heretics, the unorthodox, the modernists,

of their day. Orthodoxy has very much to its discredit. It is usually reactionary; it travels backward; it does not know the joy of adventuring. Sunrise, struggle through twilight into day, the peace of great victory, it will have nothing of. All the great spiritual leaders of the world were modernists in their day and had to face the stern blows of a rigid orthodoxy. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Paul, Luther, Wesley, the early nineteenth-century missionaries, and our present-day leaders in religious education and social reform all travel the thorny road to a golden social sunrise. If we cannot march with them, let us at least take off our hats while they pass by.

QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED

1. What political events tended to alienate the more influential priests from the strict observance of Jewish law and custom?
2. What class of Jews had been attracted by Hellenism?
3. What were the ambitions of those who formed the Sadducean party?
4. What were the Sadducean beliefs concerning angels? resurrection of the body? immortality of soul? divine Providence and human freedom of the will?
5. According to the Sadducees what constituted the law?
6. What did they contribute toward the development of the kingdom of God?
7. What circumstances compelled the development of Jewish beliefs beyond the current views in Ezra's day?
8. Who were the Chasidim? At what time did they come to be known as Pharisees?
9. What was the Pharisaic teaching concerning the law? origin of evil? angels? resurrection of the body? immortality of soul?
10. What fine conception of sin and forgiveness is put forward by the author of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs? What remarkable summing up of Jewish law is found in the same book? What can be said for this author's universalism?
11. What were the chief views and practices of the Essenes?
12. What was their contribution to the kingdom of God?

ADDITIONAL LESSON MATERIAL

Wars of the Jews, Josephus, Book II, Chapter VIII, discusses these three Jewish sects. In his *Antiquities*, Book

XIII, Chapter X. 5, 6, and Book XVIII, Chapter I. 1-6, there are additional references to the same subject.

The Book of Jubilees, edited by R. H. Charles, throws much light upon Pharisaic beliefs. It was written between 165 and 105 B. C. by one of the stricter Pharisees.

Examine the articles "Essenes," "Pharisees," and "Sadducees" in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

A History of the Jewish People, Riggs, pages 105-39.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE JEWISH MESSIANIC HOPE

No subject is more fascinating or more important in the study of Jewish religion than the study of the development of Messianic beliefs. It is the Messianic hope, more than any other element of Jewish life, which accounts for the preservation of Israel through centuries of social disorder and destructive calamities. Believing that their God would at some future day chastise their enemies, recompense them for their sorrows, purge them of their sins, and come himself to organize their life into conformity to his will, they were able to endure a succession of tidal waves of persecution which apart from this hope would have swept them from the earth. This phenomenon alone would make the Jewish Messianism a compelling subject in the study of the world's religion.

Then, too, Christianity, and especially its Christ, offer themselves as the fulfilment of these Jewish dreams. John 5. 39 declares that Jesus assured a company of skeptical Jews that the Old Testament bore its sacred and solemn witness to the validity of his own claims. Why did not the Jews, the contemporaries of Jesus, acknowledge his Messianic claims and see in his social program the Messianic kingdom? Was it stupidity or sin? A study of these Messianic beliefs will make the answer clear.

Jewish Messianism had little fixed content. Two factors only are found in every expression of the Messianic hope: (1) There is to be a new social state, primarily of Israelites, in which the ills of the present order are found no more. (2) God himself rules in this new society; his will is done fully and joyously. The form of government, the method of this new society's appearance,

the duration of this ideal state, together with many other details, shift from age to age and from author to author. Any survey of the Messianic beliefs which reduces the vast mass of material to any order is compelled to neglect many details. It is hoped that the following outline is clear enough to be helpful without slurring over many important aspects of Jewish Messianism.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE BEFORE THE EXILE

Perhaps it may be said that the Messianic hope first appears as a popular conception that was combated by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Apparently the people, feeling that the times were out of joint, were looking forward to a "day of Jehovah," to a time when Jehovah would take up the cause of his people Israel and avenge them against their foes. Amos sternly assailed this expectation. The nation itself needed purging: Israel's most dangerous foes were within her own life. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." This expectation of Amos, that at some future day Jehovah would visit Israel in judgment, is the starting point of prophetic Messianism. Isaiah too expected a fiery judgment upon Israel. A remnant of the nation, its dull conscience stirred by the afflicting judgment of Jehovah, would turn again to him and inaugurate the better day. This new social state was to center at Jerusalem. Extraordinary fertility of soil, a moral reorganization of life, and a Davidic line of kings reigning in justice and righteousness are the salient features of Isaiah's forecast of the golden age.

Zephaniah, who writes not long before the Deuteronomic reform of 621 B. C., emphasizes anew this Isaian Messianism. But now the day of Jehovah is a day of judgment for the whole world. Read 3. 8, 11-17 and determine the Messianic expectations of this prophet. Note especially that there is no Messiah: Jehovah himself is King of Israel. The manner in which his rule is carried out is not stated.

EXILIC MESSIANISM

With Jeremiah the day of Jehovah becomes primarily a destruction of Jerusalem (1. 11-16; 37. 6-10), but the nations too will drink the cup of the wine of Jehovah's fury (25. 15-26). As part of this judgment Israel will be carried into captivity by the Chaldeans. But this dispersion is not the nation's final lot: the scattered exiles shall be brought again to their own land (23. 7, 8; 24. 5, 6). There will be a new social order established in Palestine, and this will be based upon a new covenant between Jehovah and his people. The certainty and the eternity of this new social order rest upon the people's knowledge of their God (24. 7; 31. 33, 34). Examine 3. 15; 24. 4-7 and observe that Jeremiah looks forward to a Messianic kingdom. Does he expect an individual Messianic King or a dynasty? Jeremiah possesses the evangelist's heart. He does not limit the blessings of the new order to Israel. Other nations shall desire to share in the kingdom's benefits (4. 2); any of Israel's heathen enemies who repent shall share the kingdom's glories (12. 14-17), and only the unrepentant heathen shall be destroyed.

Ezekiel follows the Messianic program of Jeremiah in regard to Israel, but he does not expect the salvation of the heathen world. The destruction of Jerusalem is the long-expected judgment upon Israel. Jehovah's next move is to gather the exiles together and restore them to Palestine (11. 17). The restored exiles, being possessed by a new God-given spirit (11. 20), will put out of their land and life the detestable things that formerly caused their ruin (11. 18). Material prosperity will be the outward setting of this new life (36. 24-30). The new social order shall have its Messianic King. Read 34. 23, 24; 37. 22 and observe that the two former kingdoms now shall be united, and a single line of Davidic sovereigns shall rule over them. After this new kingdom has been established under its Messianic prince in Palestine, the nations of the world will join in a vast confederation against it. But the heathen hordes will be destroyed upon

the mountains of Judah by the might of Jehovah. The kingdom henceforth will abide in peace. See chapters 38 and 39.

POSTEXILIC MESSIANISM TO THE MACCABEAN PERIOD

Jeremiah's expectation of an all-embracing Messianic kingdom was not wholly lost sight of after the Exile. Examine Isaiah 19. 16-25 for an extension of the Messianic blessings to the Gentiles. Perhaps at about the same period—that is, in the earlier half of the fifth century—the author of Malachi also expressed this self-same universalism. See 1. 11 for its expression. Several Psalms declare the same hope. Read Psalms 22. 27-29; 65. 5-8; 86. 9, 10. The second Psalm also opens the Messianic kingdom to the penitent among the nations. Read closely the beautiful seventy-second Psalm, which so finely summarizes this nobler line of prophetic Messianism. Here too a line of Messianic sovereigns is understood.

Unfortunately other Jewish writers, following Ezekiel, limited the Messianic blessings to Israel. By some prophets a complete destruction of non-Jewish peoples is expected. See Micah 4. 11-13. Here Israel is to beat the nations into pieces and seize their possessions for themselves. Isaiah 59. 17-19; 63. 1-6 predict a great destruction of the nations. Those Gentiles who are not destroyed will become the servants of the Jews in the Messianic age. They will build the walls of Jerusalem (Isaiah 60. 10); they will humble themselves before the Jew (60. 14); they will pour the treasures of their empire into Jerusalem (60. 16, 17); they shall become Israel's herdsmen and husbandmen (61. 5).

Haggai and Zechariah, as we have seen in earlier chapters, regarded Zerubbabel as the Messiah and expected the Messianic kingdom to be inaugurated at the completion of the second Temple. See Haggai 2. 20-23; Zechariah 3. 8; 6. 12. (Compare these last two references with Zechariah 4. 9, and it becomes clear that Zerubbabel is the Messiah.) Zechariah predicts a judgment of the na-

tions (2. 8, 9), but after this purging there will be a turning of the nations toward Jehovah (2. 11). These nations shall come to Jerusalem to worship him (8. 20-23). Chapters 65 and 66 of Isaiah, written some time during the fifth century, present a new feature in this postexilic Messianism. Even the new physical order of life is a distinct break with the past. Examine Isaiah 65. 17-25; 66. 22-24 for the details. In this new earth men shall live to a grand old age: he who dies under a hundred years shall be considered to have been cut off prematurely in his youth. Animals lose their ferocity, and sorrow is at an end.

Joel, who writes about 400 B. C., following Ezekiel, brings the heathen nations to Jerusalem to be destroyed (3. 1, 2). With Joel the day of Jehovah is a sifting of Israel. Jehovah will pour out his Spirit upon his people, and those who seek him shall be saved (2. 28, 29, 32). Nature herself will shudder at his judgments (2. 30, 31; 3. 14-16). The restored kingdom is blessed with material prosperity (2. 19-27).

Zechariah 9 to 14 was written some time between 300 B. C. and the Maccabean period. Like Ezekiel he expects the heathen hordes to march upon Jerusalem, but they will be destroyed (12. 3-9). However, the slaughter will not be complete, and the remnant of the nations will then turn to Jehovah. Failure to visit Jerusalem annually will be punished by drought (14. 16-19).

THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE SECOND CENTURY B. C.

Daniel was written about 168 B. C. Read 7. 9-27 and note that when the world's evils have reached their greatest bitterness—that is, in the days of the Antiochean persecution, the writer's own times—, Jehovah sets up his judgment throne. He is the "Ancient of Days." Observe that the kingdom which persecutes Israel is destroyed (7. 11), and other nations lose their dominion (7. 12). The "one like unto a son of man" (verse 13) is the Jewish people (see 7. 27). All surviving

nations are subject to this Messianic kingdom. Observe that there is nothing said about a Messianic King. It is in connection with this kingdom that the resurrection is first brought into prominence. Those who have labored and suffered for this kingdom in an extraordinary degree and who have died before its appearance are brought up from Sheol to share its glories (12. 2). Those who have been the foremost enemies of this coming kingdom likewise shall be brought from Sheol to have visited upon them a corresponding punishment (12. 2).

From the second century comes the third book of the Sibylline Oracles, with its predictions of a Messiah who will subdue hostile nations and set up his kingdom in peace and prosperity in Jerusalem:

“Then a kingdom over all mankind
Shall he raise up for ages,
And out of every land unto the house
Of the great God shall they bring frankincense
And gifts, and there shall be no other house
To be inquired of by men yet to be,
But what God gave for faithful men to honor;
For mortals ‘temple of the mighty God’
Shall call it. And all the pathways of the plain
And rough hills and high mountains and wild waves
Of the deep shall be easy in those days
For crossing and for sailing; for all peace
On the land of the good shall come; and sword
Shall prophets of the mighty God remove;
For they are judges and the righteous kings
Of mortals. And there shall be righteous wealth
Among mankind; for of the mighty God
This is the judgment and also the power” (III, 954–75).

Enoch 6 to 36 was composed at about the same period as the book of Daniel. Here the Messianic kingdom is to be inaugurated after a judgment, and the righteous dead shall arise to share with the living righteous its blessings. These blessings are nearly wholly of the senses.

The tree of life, which once stood in the Garden of Eden, shall be transplanted to the Temple at Jerusalem. Its fruit shall be food for the elect.

“And unto the holy place shall they enter;
 And its fragrance [the tree’s] shall be in their bones,
 And they shall live a long life on earth,
 Such as thy fathers lived:
 And in their days shall no sorrow or plague
 Or torment or calamity touch them” (Enoch 25. 6).

“Then shall all the righteous escape,
 And shall live till they beget thousands of children,
 And all the days of their youth and their old age shall
 they complete in peace.
 Then shall the whole earth be tilled in righteousness,
 And shall be planted with trees and be full of blessing.
 The vine shall yield wine in abundance,
 Each measure of seed shall yield a thousandfold,
 And each measure of olives shall yield ten presses of oil”
 (Enoch 10. 17-19).

There are, however, the ethical blessings of truth and peace to make these outward goods enjoyable. The earth shall be cleansed from all defilement, sin, punishment, and torment (10. 22), and the Gentiles shall share in these blessings (10. 21).

The author of Enoch 83 to 90, who writes a few years later than the book of Daniel, accounts for the excessive afflictions of Israel by supposing that God committed Israel to the care of seventy angels, who have neglected this trust. In the midst of the Syrian persecution God will set up his judgment-throne. He will condemn the lustful angels who introduced sin into the world and then the seventy faithless angels. The apostate Jews are then cast into Gehenna. Then he will set up the New Jerusalem (90. 29). Those Gentiles who took no part in the oppression of Israel will serve Jehovah (90. 30); the righteous dead will rise to share in the kingdom. Then

the Messiah will be born, and all the members of the kingdom will be transformed into his likeness.

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs was written between 109 and 106 B. C. It teaches that the Messiah comes from the tribe of Levi, and not Judah. "This priestly Messiah was to be free from sin to walk in meekness and righteousness, to be a mediator for the Gentiles, to be a prophet of the Most High, to be King over all the nations, to war against Israel's enemies and the powers of wickedness, to open paradise to the righteous. The scene of the future kingdom is the present earth, and it is to last forever."¹

The writer of the Book of Jubilees (before 105 B. C.) believed the Messianic kingdom already had set in. The kingdom, like a grain of mustard seed, was to continue to develop until it was fully consummated. The righteous attained a thousand years, and sinners were prematurely cut off at a hundred. The kingdom, which has only a temporary duration, is ended by a general judgment. There is no resurrection. When the righteous die, their spirits pass at once to paradise.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST

Enoch 37 to 71, written in the first quarter of the century before Christ, holds to the older notion of an everlasting Messianic kingdom. The scene of this kingdom is a transformed earth.

"I will transform the earth and make it a blessing;
But I will cause my elect ones to dwell upon it:
But the sinners and evildoers shall not set foot thereon"
(45. 5).

The coming Messiah is now known as the Christ—that is, the Anointed One, the Righteous One, the Elect One, and the Son of man. Sitting upon a glorious throne, this supernatural Sovereign is the Judge of all men and all angels. The wicked are destroyed by his sword. The dead

¹ *Eschatology: Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian*, Charles, page 233.

are resurrected to receive their appropriate rewards: the wicked to be destroyed, and the righteous to dwell eternally upon the transformed earth.

The Psalms of Solomon were written between 70 and 40 B. C. According to these Psalms the Messiah is a human Prince, the descendant of David. Only God knows the time of his coming. When he appears he will overthrow the sinners within the Judæan community and drive out the Gentiles from the borders of Israel. He will gather the dispersed Jews in Jerusalem and restore the glory of the Temple worship. The Gentiles become subject to him. He is a holy, just, and wise Sovereign. The following lines, taken from the seventeenth psalm, present the leading features of his kingdom:

“Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king,
 In the time which thou, O God, knowest,
 That he may reign over Israel thy servant.
 Purge Jerusalem from the heathen that trample her
 down to destroy her,
 With wisdom and with righteousness.
 So that the nations may come from the ends of the earth
 to see his glory,
 Bringing as gifts her sons that had fainted.
 And there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst,
 For all shall be holy, and their king is the Lord Messiah.
 He shall bless the people of the Lord with wisdom and
 gladness.
 He himself is pure from sin, so that he may rule a mighty
 people,
 And rebuke princes and overthrow sinners by the might
 of his word.
 Blessed are they that shall be born in those days to behold
 the blessing of Israel.”

SUMMARY

Despite these many details the Messianic hope was more varied than it is here outlined. Enough has been given to show what diversified expectations encouraged the Jews

in the many perplexing hours of their history. This hope of a brighter future grew out of a bitter sense of the limitations of the present world. It may be said that the prevailing elements in this Messianic hope are (1) a sense of the need of judgment upon the sinners within Israel and upon the nations hostile to Israel; (2) a belief in the rise of a new society, primarily within Israel, from which sin is purged, and which hostile nations no longer oppress; (3) a belief that this new society is on earth, that its center is Jerusalem, and that it is blessed with many forms of material prosperity; (4) a belief that God's will is done completely in the new social state. Next follow two elements that are characteristic of many Jewish writers: (1) the resurrection of the righteous dead to share these Messianic blessings, and (2) the presence of a Messianic King, who is God's Vicegerent on earth. Then, there is an expansion of two elements of this scheme in the furtherance of a more perfect bliss: (1) The earth is to be transformed, and (2) the Messiah is regarded a supernatural Being. These, in the main, are the elements of the Messianic hope which were open to any meditative Jew in the time of Jesus.

Putting beside these views the teaching of Jesus, it becomes clear that the average Pharisee could not recognize in Jesus the Messiah of this expected kingdom. In the program of Jesus there were lacking the salient features of Pharisaic Messianism. There was no judgment upon wicked Jew and hostile Gentile, no convulsive natural phenomena, no outward marks of material splendor, no guaranty of a regenerated society in the mechanical fashion in which the Messianic hope had moved. Apocalyptic Messianism became the prevalent form of the Messianic hope, and it was precisely this aspect of the kingdom which was chiefly lacking in the life of Jesus. Jesus minimized the material setting of the kingdom, emphasized its progressive development, and passionately preached that it was a kingdom of the soul.

Yet, in spite of this formal chasm between the Jewish Messianism and the Messianic ideals of Jesus, it is true

that the needs out of which the Messianic hope sprang are met in Jesus, for the Messianic hope is the child of the sense of limitation and restriction. The soul is hampered by sin within and hostile forces of nature and other men without. The Messianic hope was an elaborate scheme to win freedom of life. No one can question that, were the ideals of Jesus fully accepted, these fullest needs of life would be met completely. A new social order would arise on earth and would yield to man great felicity. Sin would cease. The individual would cease to be confronted by a hostile humanity. A vast order of ills would vanish. Whatever evils still beset man from nature, the rich freedom vouchsafed by the Christ spirit would be able to conquer. And whenever the Jewish expectations burst across the earth's barriers and demanded a heaven for man and a share in its blessedness for the righteous dead, the program of Jesus more than meets the wildest dream of those who coveted a coming kingdom. There does not seem to be a noble hope or a real want of the Hebrew and Jewish world which is not adequately met in Jesus Christ. While we cannot pile up a multitude of Old-Testament texts that point with an unmistakable index finger to Jesus of Nazareth, we can say that every trembling aspiration of a thousand years of Jewish life finds a rich fulfillment in our Lord. In a very comprehensive sense all these writings of the Jew witness to his glorious Messiahship.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE TO-DAY

Sometimes failure is the greatest success. Was not the very failure in the realization of Jewish Messianism the evidence that its hope was too grossly materialistic for human happiness? Jewish Messianism did not strike deep enough into an understanding of the nature of man. There is in man a soul, or, better, man is soul, and no program of happiness will succeed which does not reckon fully with this spiritual nature of man. Jewish Messianism broke down because its hopes were largely set on things. Its failure expresses the successes of the soul's demand for full recognition.

Our Christian Messianism—our conception of the golden age of civilization—is it not far too materialistic to succeed? For the essence of this hope is in the desire to be in harmony with one's world. It is a widespread heresy of many social reformers that happier conditions in natural surroundings work satisfaction in man's inner life. No effort at social reform, no crusade against unjust conditions of toil, should be abated. But when poverty, disease, and ignorance are eliminated from the social order, the soul still will be struggling with a material world, and any tendency to exalt things over soul ends in spiritual disaster. There is no possible way of being in harmony with one's world save in the minimizing of the physical order of life. This freedom of life, the subordination of nature to the soul, was won by Jesus and may be achieved by any who will follow the selfsame path. In this manner alone will the Messianic dream be fulfilled.

Jesus realized the kingdom of God in his own life. He did it by building up the interests of the soul. The soul comes to its own in fellowship. For Jesus life's first meaning was to live in comradeship with God. God's will was to be done. This was life's paramount issue. In the consciousness of seeking God's will and in conforming to it Jesus won a marvelous freedom from the customary torments of man. His soul was magnified by this masterful desire of his to obey the Supreme Will. His life was enlarged too by his passion for human brotherhood. Jesus sought to break down the barriers that embittered society and to enter sympathetically into each man's life. By this passion his soul entered into peace and strength.

By this triumph of soul he becomes the world's Messiah. All that is essential in the old hopes is fulfilled in him. The rule of God, peace with mankind, an open door to the Gentiles, freedom from sin, victory over death, everlasting happiness, a final justification of God's dealings with mankind—all these appear in the life achieved and commended by our Lord. The world needs no other Messiah. No man who really follows Jesus will feel any essential detail of his Messianic desires lacking in him.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is meant by the Messianic hope? What relation does it sustain to Israel's history? What are the common factors of Jewish Messianism?

2. What form did the hope of a golden age first assume among the Hebrews? What new meaning was given by Amos to "the day of Jehovah"? What further advance was made in prophetic Messianism by Isaiah? What was Zephaniah's contribution?

3. What meaning was given to "the day of Jehovah" by Jeremiah? Was the sack of Jerusalem in 586 a fulfillment of the prophetic conception of the day of Jehovah? Observe that the Messianic hope now for the first time demands a gathering of the scattered exiles in Palestine.

4. What guarantee does Jeremiah offer that the restored state will not be guilty of the same evils that wrought the downfall of Samaria and Jerusalem? What does Jeremiah mean by "knowing God"? What political form does this Messianic society assume? What is its attitude toward the Gentiles?

5. With what ideas of Jeremiah does Ezekiel agree? What is Ezekiel's attitude toward the heathen world?

6. What postexilic writers followed Jeremiah in his program for the Gentiles?

7. Turn to the seventy-second Psalm and determine whether the Messiah is an individual or a line of kings.

8. What are the Messiah's duties or offices? the duration and extent of his kingdom? the kingdom's relation to the Gentile world? the material setting of this golden age? the scene of this Messianic empire? its ethical content? What provision is made for those who have died before the kingdom appears?

9. What writers followed Ezekiel in their attitude to the Gentiles? What is their teaching concerning the heathen nations?

10. What new turn was given to the hope by Haggai and Zechariah?

11. What two new features appear in Joel?

12. How does the second Zechariah propose to secure the worship of Jehovah by the remnant of the Gentiles?

13. What moral need first brought the resurrection to a dominant place in Jewish thinking? When did the resurrection become a part of the Messianic hope?

14. According to Daniel, what is the scene of the Messianic kingdom, and what is the relation of the Gentiles to it? Where is the scene of this kingdom, according to the Sibylline Oracles? What is its duration?

15. What other items are mentioned in the lines quoted in this lesson?

16. What are the main features of the Messianic hope in Enoch 6 to 36? How does the author of Enoch 83 to 90 account for the afflictions of Israel under the Greeks? What are his leading features of the Messianic age?

17. What contribution is made by the author of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs?

18. What strikingly divergent views were held by the author of the Book of Jubilees?

19. What are the views of Enoch 37 to 71 concerning the person of the Messiah? concerning the scene of his kingdom?

20. Who is the Messiah according to the author of the Psalms of Solomon? What are the functions of his office? What is the scene of his kingdom? What provision is made for the righteous dead?

21. Consider very carefully these general questions: (a) What specific or detailed expectations of Hebrew and Jewish Messianism were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth? (b) What leading elements in these centuries of Messianic dreams were wholly out of touch with the kingdom of God as Jesus knew it? (Remember that the expected Jewish Messianic kingdom is a kingdom of God.) (c) What general aspects of these aspirations of Israel are realized in Jesus? May it truly be said that Jesus satisfies the essentials, if not the formal details, of all this longing for a golden age?

ADDITIONAL LESSON MATERIAL

The Postexilic Prophets, Bennett, pages 347-60.

The Religion of Israel, Smith, pages 293-314.

The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, Knudson, pages 351-81.

The Theology of the Old Testament, Davidson, pages 356-402.

Article "Messiah," *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings, and in his *Dictionary of the Gospels*.

Israel's Messianic Hope. Goodspeed, collates the various Old-Testament passages bearing upon this subject.

CHAPTER XXV

THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

THERE are four outstanding achievements of the religion of Israel which were taken over by Christianity and which are of supreme importance in the development of the kingdom of God. One of these, and first in order of importance, is prophecy. Prophecy, as we have seen in many chapters, is that experience of man in which, conscious of immediate fellowship with God, he becomes aware of new authority and new meanings in the divine will and so gives expression in word and deed to this new life. In prophecy religion takes on its highest reality and originality. In consequence of this achievement Israel's prophets enthroned the moral life as the soul of religion. This fellowship with God is maintained solely in common ethical ideals and goals. Therefore, it is Israel's glory that she ethicized religious experience into the commanding religious ideal of the world. Her third gift to civilization is the Messianic hope. Her final outstanding service to Christianity centers in the Old Testament itself. Christianity not only inherited from Israel the Old-Testament writings, which preserved so much of Israel's religion during a dozen centuries, but obtained from Judaism the idea of a sacred canon. This lesson sets forth what is meant by the canonical Scriptures and the importance of this idea in the development of the kingdom of God.

THE MEANING OF THE CANON

By the Old-Testament canon is meant the collection of writings now included in the Old Testament as it is printed in our English Bibles. The word "canon," used in connection with the Bible, means the list of books that have been declared by some competent religious authority to

be necessary and sufficient for the religious guidance of life. The word "canon" also implies that the books so included have been selected out of a larger group of writings also treating of religion. Preceding chapters have made clear that the Old-Testament Scriptures were only a part of the religious writings of the Jews. Out of the larger group of writings there came to be selected certain books that were accepted as sacred, as having divine authority, and, therefore, as necessary and sufficient for the religious instruction of Israel.

We have seen that the teaching of the prophets was accepted as the utterance of Jehovah. Consider again the import of these words: "And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, . . . saying, Go ye, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found. . . . So Hilkiah the priest . . . went unto Huldah the prophetess . . . and they communed with her. And she said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel," etc. (2 Kings 22. 12-15). Compare with this incident of the seventh century before Christ a scene in the stirring Maccabean times. The Jews have possessed themselves again of the Temple, which had been defiled with heathen sacrifices. It seemed to them that the altar of Jehovah, having been desecrated by heathen offerings, could not be used again. Yet these stones, having once been consecrated to Jehovah, could not be treated commonly. To this situation the following words apply: "And they took counsel concerning the altar of burnt offerings which had been profaned, what they should do with it, and there came into their mind a good counsel that they should pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them because the Gentiles had defiled it; and they pulled down the altar, and laid up the stones in the mountain of the house in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to give an answer concerning them" (1 Maccabees 4. 44-46). Here at widely separated periods of Israel's history is expressed religion's dependence on the living medium of divine revelation. This expression of God's word neces-

sarily precedes the use of a book in which divine guidance may be found. Before there could be a canon, a collection of writings regarded as sacred and authoritative, there must first be a transfer from the spoken to the written word as the source of divine revelation.

THE GROWTH OF THE OLD-TESTAMENT CANON

The Legal Canon.—Keeping in mind that the idea of the canon means an authorized selection of sacred writings, we turn to one of a few most significant scenes in Israel's life. The account is found in 2 Kings 23. 1-3. Read these verses closely and observe that King Josiah summons a popular assembly in the Temple area at Jerusalem; that the elders of the families, priests, and prophets are present, together with a great company of unofficial citizens; that the king reads to the assembled Israelites a certain book that demands in the name of Jehovah certain moral and ceremonial regulations; that the king and his people solemnly covenant to observe the demands of this book and in so pledging themselves to its observance they accept this book as the true word of God. This is the first clearly taken step in the formation of the Old-Testament canon. The book that here begins the Hebrew canon was in most respects our present book of Deuteronomy.

This Deuteronomic Code held its normative position from the date of its adoption, 621 B. C., through the exilic period and became the law that directed the worship of the second Temple until the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem at about 400 B. C. During the intervening years Jewish law was still further collected, modified, and codified. Ezra brought with him to Jerusalem a new code of laws, which he succeeded in getting the Jewish community to adopt. The account is given in Nehemiah 8. 1-12. Observe that Ezra reads "the book of the law of Moses" to a mixed assembly; and the people's behavior, together with the formal statement (Nehemiah 9. 38) that a covenant was made, indicate that this book of law, like the Deuteronomic Code of more than two centuries before, is solemnly

accepted as canonical—that is, in this book God's will is revealed, and this written revelation has authority in the conduct of life. Not long after this event it is believed that the Deuteronomic Code, to which in the meantime had been affixed the historical narratives upon which it was based, was united with the code introduced by Ezra, and this union produced the Pentateuch in the form in which we now have it. So the canon of the law was formed near the opening of the fourth century before Christ. From this time on it holds an unquestioned place in the religious life of Judaism.

The Prophetical Canon.—The steps leading toward the canonization of the prophetical books of the Old Testament cannot be traced so clearly. In the prologue of the apocryphal book the Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus), which was written about 130 B. C., it is stated, "Whereas many and great things have been delivered unto us by the law and the prophets, and by the others that have followed in their steps, my grandfather Jesus having given himself to the reading of the law and the prophets and the other books of our fathers," etc. Here the threefold division of important Jewish religious writings is clearly taken for granted. According to 49. 10 of this same book, written about 180 B. C., the books of the prophets already were regarded as canonical. These prophetical writings were our present books Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve so-called minor prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Between 400 and 200 B. C. these books attained unto that use and eminence in Judaism which warranted their entrance into the Holy Scriptures.

There is no hint that they were so accepted by any formal decision. The writings of these prophets appeared more and more important as prophecy grew rarer. Read again the foregoing quotation from 1 Maccabees. Note the following from 1 Maccabees 14. 41: "The Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever until there should arise a

faithful prophet." Examine also Zechariah 13. 3-5 and observe the startling prediction that the day is coming when prophecy shall be regarded as dangerous to the state, and it shall be necessary for the parents of a prophet to put their son to death. All these references indicate that prophecy grew rarer in Judaism and that by the end of the third century B. C. (and without doubt earlier) prophecy ceased in Israel. When this took place, the writings of the earlier prophets, with their commanding "Thus saith the Lord," and the historical evidence that this claim of voicing the divine will was recognized by the community (2 Kings 22. 12-15), seemed the more valuable and noteworthy.

The Third Canon.—When the prophetic canon had obtained recognition, at least by 200 B. C., there were other greatly prized Jewish writings that at this time failed of the recognition obtained by the early historical writings and the books of the prophets. Such were Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Ruth, Song of Songs, and many of the Psalms. Some of these failed of inclusion in the prophetic canon on account of their contents; others because they had been so recently written; while Daniel and probably Esther were not yet in existence. Under Antiochus Epiphanes the order went forth to destroy the "books of the law" (1 Maccabees 1. 56, 57), and failure to conform to this law incurred the sentence of death. This destruction of the law undoubtedly enhanced the value of their national writings in the eyes of patriot Jews, and the destruction of such canonical books was probably accompanied by an indiscriminate destruction of other cherished Jewish writings. As a result of this persecution all their religious books would take on heightened sanctity. Hence, in the quieter days of the Maccabean kingdom such books as had been purged by the fire of the Antiochean persecution won their place of veneration in the regard of Judaism. A tradition of such a new veneration for these writings is preserved in 2 Maccabees 2. 14: "And in like manner Judas also gathered together for us all those writings that

had been scattered by reason of the war that befell, and they are still with us." It is quite probable that the books mentioned above, and which are now a part of our Old Testament, won their place in the reverent regard of the Pharisees by 100 B. C. Thus, while there was no official pronouncement in regard to the prophetic canon and this third group of writings (known in Hebrew as the Kethubim and in Greek as the Hagiographa), the limits of the Old Testament were practically settled a century before the Christian era.

That the third group of writings was not firmly and irrevocably fixed for nearly two centuries is witnessed by the counsel of Jamnia, held probably in A. D. 90. At this assembly of Jewish rabbis the question of the canon was raised. There seems to have been a difference of opinion among Jewish teachers whether the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes were Holy Scripture. At this time it finally was agreed that these two books belonged to the sacred writings of the Jew. There is evidence, also, that at times the canonicity of Ezekiel, Jonah, Proverbs, and Esther, in addition to the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, was questioned. It was said that Ezekiel contradicted the Pentateuch, hinted that Jonah was a piece of legend, supposed that Proverbs favored heretics, that Esther omitted the name of God, that the Song of Songs was a secular poem, and that Ecclesiastes was unorthodox. But all these points were eventually resolved, and the Old Testament by A. D. 100 stands forth the exclusive Scriptures of Judaism and the treasured possession of the Christian communities.

The Alexandrian Canon.—The three canons discussed above, which include our present Old-Testament canon, were the collection of Jewish sacred writings made by Jews in Palestine. Among the Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt there was a larger collection of writings, which possessed, or nearly so, the character of Holy Scripture. It was the Palestinian canon that was used by Jesus and his disciples. But the Gentile churches, built up out of a Greek-speaking world, used the Septuagint, with its

wider collection of books. This is what is called the Alexandrian canon. This so-called Alexandrian canon in addition to the books of our present Old Testament, included the following: First and Second Esdras, Tobit, Judith, seven additional chapters to Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (or the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach), Baruch, the Song of the Three Children, the History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasses, First and Second Maccabees. These books had wide circulation among the early Christians and finally, with the exception of First and Second Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, regarded by the Roman Church also as apocryphal, were included in the canon of the Roman Catholic Church. By the Protestants this entire list is counted apocryphal. This constitutes the chief difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles. Among the Greek-speaking Jews there were other writings in circulation which failed eventually of canonicity. Some of these are the Psalms of Solomon, Enoch, and the Book of Jubilees, all of which are of great importance in tracing the development of pre-Christian Jewish religion.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CANON

Among the Jews themselves in the pre-Christian centuries the conception and use of a collection of sacred Scriptures, as we have seen, was not so prominent as it has been among Jews since the opening of the Christian era and within the Christian church. But during the four centuries before Christ the canon was growing in importance, and apart from the canon of the law the Maccabean struggles would not have taken place. It may be said that the Pentateuch preserved Judaism through the Greek persecutions and, together with subsequent additions to the canon, enabled Judaism to survive the destruction of the nation.

The Christian church began with the Old-Testament canon as its only sacred Scriptures. The apostles undertook to show that the life and teachings of Jesus, his deeds

and his destiny, were the precise fulfillment of Old-Testament predictions. Their whole method of early preaching would have been impossible apart from the canonical conception and use of Jewish religious writings. Then, too, the presence of a Jewish canon stimulated the early church to collect and reverence the writings of Christian apostles, evangelists, and teachers. The very existence of a New Testament rests upon the presence of the Old Testament in Judaism in the time of Christ.

With the exception of the codes of law none of these Old-Testament books, when they first appeared, had stamped upon them, in the estimation of the people, unmistakable evidence of their divine authority. Their acceptance as the Word of God was a gradual appreciation of their power to build up the moral and religious life of men. This final Jewish estimate of their own writings has been approved by the judgment of the Christian world.

“If we look steadily at the contents of the Bible from the point of view of an increasing purpose, they seem quite worthy to have come from God. If we take them as a revelation of what God himself is and of his method of his dealings with mankind and if we bear in mind that this revelation has been gradual and progressive, it is difficult to conceive one that could have been better. There is impressed upon the writings which make up the Bible a breadth and a variety, an intensity and purity of religious life, that are without parallel in any other literature of the world. This is the fact which we seek to express in the doctrine of inspiration. We know no other explanation for it than a special action of the Spirit of God.”¹

The writing of the Old-Testament books and their collection into a canon show that Hebrew and Jewish life for a thousand years was being impressed more and more clearly by the Spirit of God. God was dealing actively with them through all their history, and there was a continual manifestation of his will. Their achieve-

¹ Article “Bible,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Sanday.

ments constitute a stream of religious revelation. Yet one cannot suppose that God was not dealing actively with men beyond the limits of the Bible. To do so would stifle our hopes and ideals to-day. The stream of divine revelation not only flows through Jewish minds: it courses through the life of every people and will continue until it empties into the sea of perfect knowledge of God. The Bible shows us this stream of divine contact and revelation flooding its channels, but unless it also points out that revelation is and ought to be a constant possession of the Christian church it falls short of its highest mission.

THE BIBLE IN HUMAN LIFE

Our studies have shown that the Old Testament springs up out of the throbbing, living experiences of men. It is an intensely human book. It quivers with human trial and struggle, triumph and tragedy, despair and undefeated aspiration. It voices the human soul in protest against the physical world through nearly a thousand years. It is a record of man's approach to God and God's reception of man. It points the way in which any man must move to live in company with his heavenly Father.

Therefore, we must bring the Bible back into life. It has gone from our homes and schools. Our youth are unfamiliar with its deathless lessons; our men and women know few of its truths to sustain them in the crisis of life. We guess at the teaching of Him we call our Master. We do not know the rare and splendid triumphs of the prophets, in whom religion became ethical fellowship with God. We are not caught up into its mighty urging of the primacy of the inner life in the affairs of mankind.

The greatest enemy of the Bible is he who will not study it. The measure of the people's wisdom in these days of tumbling theories and institutions is the earnestness with which they turn to the sacred writings to find in them the way to God. It is time that the church turned with new eagerness to the Book of books. We must make the years immediately at hand a Bible-studying age. Bible reading must be reestablished in every home, and every mem-

ber of the church must enroll in some class for Bible study. To fail to do these things is national stagnation and individual death.

We cannot continue to exist in militarism, greed, and materialistic ideals of worth and success. We must hear, above our blind willfulness and passion, God's call to seek first the kingdom of justice, righteousness, and love. There always will be dark ages, whose struggles are not sacrifices to usher in our long-dreamed brotherhood. Unless we humble ourselves before God and ask what we must do to be saved, there can be no other end to selfish nationalism among the peoples of the earth than an age of darkness.

The first step to ascertain God's will is to bring back the Bible into our homes and schools. Nothing less than a new generation of prayer, Bible study, and obedience of God will save civilization in times of trial. God speaks to us in terrible warnings. The great war, which filled the world with horror and which crushed the castes of birth, wealth, and political supremacy, sounded one continuous thunderous call in the souls of men: the call to search the sacred Scriptures to find in them for our suffering, foolish, misguided world the way to God.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What three of Israel's contributions to Christianity have been studied in previous chapters?

2. What service was rendered the Christian church by the Jewish Scriptures?

3. What does the word "canon" mean? What elements in a book make it canonical? Note that the very idea of a canon involves the transfer from the spoken to the written word as the source of divine revelation. In the light of this fact what loss to religion does the possession of a canon entail? Estimate the gain to religion through dependence on canonical Scriptures.

4. What Jewish writing first won canonicity? Under what circumstances did this take place?

5. At what time was the next step taken? What writings next became canonical? Narrate the circumstances that led to this second canon of Jewish law.

6. When did our present Pentateuch obtain its canonicity?

7. What differences in method obtain in the formation of

prophetical canon? By what date was this accomplished? What books are included in the prophetical canon? What conditions emphasized the importance of these prophetical writings and so helped forward their canonicity?

8. What writings were in existence by 200 B. C., but failed to get into the canon? Why were they not included?

9. What others of our present Old-Testament books were not included in the prophetical canon, and why? What historical conditions probably enhanced the value of these writings? When did they practically become canonical?

10. What are those Old-Testament books whose canonicity was questioned? For what reasons?

11. When was the canon of the Old Testament finally settled?

12. What is meant by the Alexandrian canon? What were its contents?

13. What was the usage of the early Christians in the matter of the Old-Testament canon?

14. What books are regarded as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church which are not found in Protestant Bibles? What is the explanation of this difference?

15. What important Jewish writings entirely failed of canonicity?

16. What immeasurably important political service was rendered Judaism by its canon of the law? What has been the contribution of the Old-Testament canon to the Christian church? What reasons are there for the continued use in the church of these Jewish writings as canonical?

17. Ought the use of canonical Scriptures to make needless the study of other religious writings, which are not in the canon?

18. To what extent should a Christian rely upon the Bible for the guidance of his life?

SELECTED READINGS

The Old Testament in the Jewish Church, W. R. Smith, Lecture VI.

Article "Bible," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Volume II, pages 563-71.

Articles "Bible," "Canon," and "Old-Testament Canon," *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings.

The Canon of the Old Testament, Ryle. This is an excellent discussion of the formation and growth of the Jewish canonical Scriptures.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DEVELOPING KINGDOM OF GOD

OUR long survey of the development of religious ideas among the Hebrews and the Jewish people until the beginning of the Christian era is nearly done. It has been a fascinating story in itself, but in the light it throws upon the origins of Christianity its value is beyond estimate. The present chapter summarizes the changes that took place through the dozen centuries that have occupied us in the study of Israel and Judah. We have defined the kingdom of God to be the rule of God in human life. During the centuries under review vast changes have taken place in the spiritual structure of the individual and community, and revolutionary transformations have been wrought in man's conception of the character and purposes of God. These changes have given religion an indisputable position in the life of mankind. We may well believe that God's sovereignty, his character, and his purposes do not change their nature; but we can see that man's idea of these aspects of the being of God does change. In discussing the development of the sovereignty of God we are studying only the development in man's conception of his divine Overlord.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The Source of God's Authority.—Like other primitive peoples the Hebrews began their national history with power as the dominant conception of Jehovah's character. He was worthy of the Hebrews' obedience because he had freed them from the servitude of Egypt and given them a home in Canaan. This power was the power to coerce nature and to lead his people in victorious battle. It was his ability to get things done by a kind of physical crush

of obstacles which constituted his right to the loyalty of his people. Read Exodus 15. 1-10 and note this conception of Jehovah's sovereignty. Examine also Judges 5. 4, 5, taken from another one of Israel's earliest songs, and observe that Jehovah's right to Hebrew obedience is based upon this physical conception of his power.

With the eighth-century prophets the supreme right of Jehovah to rule in the affairs of men rests in his moral character. Jehovah still rules in might, but he keeps his throne because he demands justice and righteousness. The student should reexamine Amos 2. 4-8; 3. 13-15; 4. 1; Hosea 4. 1-3; 10. 13, 14; and Isaiah's vision (chapter 6) of the holiness of Jehovah. God rules, according to prophetic teaching, not because he can, but because, through the moral splendor of his nature, he is worthy to administer the affairs of men. There is no possible overemphasis of the importance of this contribution to religion.

The Character of God.—Something of the finer conceptions that men came to hold of the character of God is indicated. Genesis 2. 9; 3. 22, 23 is a fragment of an early account of man's failure to win immortality. In the Garden of Eden there were many trees pleasant to look upon, and whose fruits were excellent food. There were also two magic trees among them: the tree whose fruit made those who ate it wise, and the tree whose fruit conferred immortality. From the reasons given in Genesis 3. 22, 23 for the expulsion of man from this paradise what inference must be drawn concerning the character of deity? Also, in the other narrative of the transgression of the prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge what moral basis is there given for Jehovah's denial of the fruit of this tree to man? Is it fair to say that in neither of these accounts does any moral character appear in Jehovah? Compare this early conception of Jehovah's will, which brooks no thwarting, with the intensely moral character of his will as revealed in the prophets. In Isaiah 1. 2 it is said that Jehovah's children have rebelled against him. This means that they have not fulfilled his will. Read 1. 17 and note what constitutes the nature of this re-

bellion. What development has taken place in Israel's conception of the character of Jehovah?

The Scope of His Kingdom.—In the earliest periods of Israel's life Jehovah was not regarded the world's sole Deity. Each nation or people had its own divine lord. There are many evidences of this early belief in our Old-Testament literature. Examine Deuteronomy 32. 21; 1 Samuel 5. 1-5; 26. 19; 1 Kings 16. 31, 32. Jehovah's rule was confined to his own land. When David was driven out of Palestine into Philistia, the worship of Jehovah was possible no longer. Naaman needed to carry "two mules' burden" of Palestinian soil—Jehovah's soil—with him to Damascus to build Jehovah's altar thereon in order to make the worship of Jehovah legitimate in a foreign land. Again, the eighth-century prophets worked a revolution in Hebrew thought. In Amos 1 and 2 Jehovah's rule is extended to Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Examine Isaiah 5. 26; 13. 17, where Assyria and, later, the Median kingdom are considered to be within the realm of Jehovah and subject to his authority. He uses Assyria to execute vengeance upon Israel and the Medes to chastise Babylonia. Later prophets (for example Zechariah 14. 9) assert in unequivocal language Jehovah's universal sway.

The scope of Jehovah's rule, in the thought of Israel, was extended in another direction. In early Hebrew thought Jehovah's rule was confined to the living. The dead, who drew out their dreary lives in Sheol, were beyond his jurisdiction. He was God of the living, and not of the departed shades of mankind. Examine Psalms 30. 9; 31. 22; 88. 5; 115. 17; 119. 175; 146. 2; Isaiah 38. 18, 19 for this belief: that Sheol lies outside the dominion of Jehovah. But as Jehovah's rule was moralized, his sway was believed to extend over the realm of departed spirits. See Job 26. 6; 38. 17; Proverbs 15. 11; Psalms 139. 7, 8 for this inclusion of Sheol within the boundaries of Jehovah's kingdom. It was not until this extension of Jehovah's sovereignty was accepted that belief in a resurrection was possible. When the goal of religion was con-

ceived as fellowship with Jehovah, and the Messianic kingdom became a fixed hope, the righteous dead then are expected to be brought forth from Sheol to share these blessings. In the canonical literature this hope of a resurrection is found in Isaiah 26. 19 and Daniel 12. 2, 3. Finally, this rule of the departed spirits of men insures their blessed immortality apart from the resurrection of the body.

“And their bones shall rest in the earth, and their spirits shall have much joy, and they shall know that it is the Lord who executes judgment, and shows mercy to hundreds and thousands and to all that love him” (Book of Jubilees 23. 11).

“The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
And no torment shall touch them,
In the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died;
But they are in peace,
For even if in the sight of men they be punished,
Their hope is full of immortality” (Wisdom of Solomon 3. 1-4).

Thus, Jehovah, from being the Deity of the living Hebrew, comes to be believed as the Lord of the living and the dead of all peoples in time and eternity.

The Nature of His Rule Among Men.—In the earliest literature Jehovah is a war god who fights Israel's battles until the tribes are settled in Canaan and who comes to their relief in times of crisis and helps them overthrow their enemies. He is little concerned in the social development of his people. Again it is the prophets beginning with Amos who made clear that his kingdom is not political superiority over the nation's enemies but is social justice and righteousness. This is the beginning of the conception of the Messianic hope. There shall be a kingdom, Israel's teachers were constrained to hope, wherein righteousness, justice, and peace shall envelop the world.

Jehovah's Purposes in Creation.—In the sixth tablet of the Babylonian story of creation the following lines occur:

“When Marduk heard the word of the gods,
 His heart moved him, and he devised a cunning plan.
 ‘My blood will I take, and bone will I fashion;
 I shall create man, who shall inhabit the earth;
 Let the worship of the gods be established; let their
 shrines be built.’”

It is conjectured that “the word of the gods” is their complaint that there is none to do them reverence. Hence, man is created to build altars and to conduct a worship to please his overlords. It is not unlikely that this is a common Semitic conception of the purpose of creation. However, there is no clear statement in preprophetic literature to show that the purpose of man’s creation was a vital question. But Exodus 19. 5 and Deuteronomy 32. 8, 9; 16 and 17, 21 to 24 do indicate that as long as Israel worshiped Jehovah, all went well; but as soon as they worshiped another deity, Jehovah was determined to destroy them. This seems to bear out the Babylonian view. But with the preaching of the prophets a higher view dawns. The entire teaching of the prophets is based on the belief that Jehovah’s purpose in man is to draw him into moral fellowship with himself. “What doth Jehovah require of thee?” asks Micah, in the name of prophecy, of his countrymen. He answers the question: “To do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God.” It would therefore seem that the end of creation, according to prophetic thought, is to bring into being a world of persons who shall live in moral fellowship with each other. Undoubtedly such fellowship is conceived to heighten the glory and satisfaction of God and to this extent connects with the Babylonian view. But to conceive creation as a process in the development of a moral society certainly justifies the existence of nature and man and exalts once more the Hebrew prophet as the developer of the world’s finest thinking and spiritual values.

God’s Demands From Men.—We have seen that in the earliest Hebrew centuries men felt that Jehovah’s chief demand from them was worship. In the earliest Deca-

logue, imbedded in Exodus 34,¹ among the ten divine requirements nine deal with the obligations of worship due Jehovah. This worship became more and more an affair of ritual at the various sanctuaries and it made no moral demand and offered no moral social guidance. As long as the Hebrew felt that his Deity's supreme demand of him was an animal sacrifice, the kingdom could not progress. It was not until God's demands were in terms of moral fellowship—"to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God"—that the rule of God in human life took on surpassing interest. Examine again Amos 5. 21-23; Hosea 6. 6; Isaiah 1. 11-17 for this high demand for just social relationships among men as evidence of the fitness for ethical fellowship with God. Undoubtedly this is the finest triumph of Hebrew thought. Religion is grounded in moral fellowship; worship is not sacrifice but service.

MAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE RULE OF GOD

The Place of Worship in Religion.—With primitive ideas of the character of God worship is an important factor in religion. To express reverence, to exhibit the feeling that deity is far beyond the rank of man, to placate him who gives the rain, produces the harvests, and multiplies the flocks and herds, is of the utmost importance. Religion in the preprophetic centuries was largely an affair of worship. There were no sacred Scriptures to read, no prayers to be said, no religious instruction given. There were perplexing questions to be answered by a seer or by an appeal to Urim and Thummim. Away from a sanctuary a vow might be made, but such a vow was a pledge to the Deity in return for a favor, to sacrifice at an altar, at the earliest opportunity. It was not until the prophets made clear the ethical character of deity that worship became a secondary element in religion. For the prophets, worship in the sense in which it was carried on at sanctuaries was worse than useless: it was positively demoralizing. In th:

¹ Consult *The Religion of Israel*, Ascham, pages 68-70.

prophetic conception of religion worship has little place. It means to the prophet a sense of humility in the presence of a perfectly just, righteous, and gracious Sovereign. Unfortunately for the development of religion, this conception of worship took little hold upon Israel's life. After the Exile the Temple ritual was resumed and continued to dominate Jewish life until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This idea of religion, that it is primarily worship, made possible the elaborate development of Israel's priesthood and sacrificial system. The political history of Judaism, necessitating some external religious object about which the persecuted nation could rally, did much to foster and to perpetuate the priestly conception of worship and religious life. This is Israel's chief unfortunate gift to Christianity. The priest never has been and never can be a part of purest religion. He interrupts the moral fellowship of the individual with his God, and this fellowship is the soul of religion. Yet, in spite of this priestly worship, Israel has given us also the prophetic ideal, and to this ideal the seers of the ages have turned for comfort and guidance. Perhaps it was from brooding over Israel's great prophets that Jesus, in his life and teaching, upheld the prophetic and not the priestly ideal of religion. For with Jesus, as with the prophetic teachers of Israel, religion was summed up in complete love of God and love of neighbor expressed in moral terms.

The Meaning of Sin.—Refusal to carry out the divine requirements is sin. From the Decalogue in Exodus 34 we have certain early conceptions of sin. It is sin to worship any god other than Jehovah (Exodus 34. 14); to use molded images in worship (carved ones evidently are permissible) (34. 17); the use of leavened bread in a sacrificial meal (34. 25); to stew a kid in its mother's milk (34. 26). The Decalogue of Deuteronomy 5. 7-21 shows distinct moral advance. To commit murder, to steal, to calumniate one's neighbor, to covet another's property, to lie, to commit adultery, to disobey parents—these anarchic irruptions into a quiet social order are sin. In the teach-

ing of the prophets the ideal life is moral fellowship with Jehovah and with men; any act, any thought, which breaks in upon this fellowship is sin. In Chapter XXIII it was stated that the author of the Twelve Patriarchs believed that men were to live in glad and just fellowship with each other and with God, and that anything that interrupted this open communion of soul was sin. It was this prophetic—better, Pharisaic—conception of sin which leads directly, through legalistic Judaism, to Jesus. We remember that the stricter Pharisees defined sin as any breach of the written law. A code of laws defines sin more sharply, but its mechanical notion of sin does not lead to the finest type of life.

The Forgiveness of Sins.—We have seen that forgiveness was not a simple matter under Judaism. An elaborate system of sacrifice and cleansing ritual was instituted to set men right with God. The priest became a mediator between the sinner and God. We saw too that in the elaborate angelology of Pharisaism an angel became the mediator and intercessor. Jewish Christian theology seized upon this teaching of priestly Judaism and turned Jesus into a Sacrifice, a High Priest, a Mediator, and an Intercessor. All this assumes the reluctance or the impatience of God to forgive. It must not be forgotten that the prophetic ideal of the kingdom—of God's rule in human affairs—is warm and trustful fellowship of man with his divine Master in moral terms. No priestly mediator or intercessor is needed in such a scheme of the relation of God to man; what is needed is man's putting away his sin and his humble turning unto God to renew the fellowship his selfish thought or act had broken. Thus, forgiveness in the best Old-Testament thought is precisely what it is in the teaching of Jesus.

SUMMARY

It is not easy to hold the many details of Israel's religious life in mind or to summarize the beliefs and experiences of the Hebrew and Jewish conceptions of the kingdom of God. There is not space here even to present

the barest outline of this wonderful achievement of the Jewish people. Think of the miracle that the possession of these literary fragments of their faith in our Bible means to the world. Of all nations of antiquity they alone struggled out of crude, primitive, nonmoral religious beliefs and practices into an ethical monotheism that is still the inspiration of the world. What is the explanation of this miracle of history? In these chapters we have followed the changes in man's thought and experiences. It might seem that religion was an affair only of human life. In this final word let us look on the other side of this continually shifting scene of religious life. Certainly we shall find no explanation of our miracle on the human side. Unless there accompanied these various changes, this movement toward a more spiritual life, a real and continuous activity on the part of God, there is no interpretation of Israel's life. Inspiration and revelation as activities of God are the only explanation of Israel's unique and wonderful history. It is this which is fundamental in the kingdom of God. Man's ceaseless strivings toward an ideal, apart from the living God as the Source and the Goal of his striving, is unthinkable. Israel's experience, her centuries of upward striving, her moral achievements, her Messianic hope, her written Scriptures, bear witness to the presence in her life of the eternal God.

ACROSS TWENTY CENTURIES

Across twenty centuries the Hebrew extends to you his experience of God. He unbosoms his soul and shows you that he has discovered God to be a just, loving, and righteous Ruler, Friend, and Father, and tells you that you can enter into fellowship with him. You need no intermediary to insure you welcome in the heart of God.

He affirms too, with unshaken optimism, that this Deity, whom he came to know in the midst of searching affliction, is actively constructing a world of righteousness. You may sometimes doubt the coming of the golden age; our ancient Hebrew dreamer sees it with his prophetic soul. He passes on to you his Messianic hope.

He teaches you what varied types of men may be kingdom builders. He and his brothers were dreamers: staid, practical statesmen, soldiers, legislators, poets, prophets, kings, priests, farmers, shepherds; but each of them, with an ideal like a miner's lamp, pressing steadily into the dark.

He passes on to you his finest lesson—that it is a man's task and opportunity to follow the gleam of truth in his own soul. Even when the explorer sees that no step ever has been taken his way before, he must pursue his trackless path undaunted. God's routes to the celestial city have not yet all been mapped.

He urges you to use failure as a rock-cut path up difficulty to the blue sky. His kingdom was rent in twain, his capitals fell to the ruthless invader, his people were scattered to the ends of the earth, his reassembled exiles were harassed unto death by Greeks who would force their culture upon the world; but he kept his soul fixed upon the eternal purposes of God. The man with an ideal is never a failure.

He bids you to be no beggar in religion. The Jew was always a bargainer even in his relation to God. He was bound to God by a covenant, but God was bound likewise to him. This brought him at last to see that he must give in order to take. He could not win the joy of moral fellowship with God unless he gave the joy of moral fellowship to God.

Across twenty centuries the Hebrew offers you his kingdom of God. You modern Christian—you American Christian—, with your nation strong and throbbing with life, are the inheritor of his kingdom whose nation is no more. Take the gift and beware the fateful history of him who gives it to you. Whenever he subverted his kingdom to material ends he was crushed and thrown aside; when he made it the light of his soul, when it was a blessed experience within him, he spoke and lived a universal life. Take the Hebrew's kingdom, as Christ took it, and glorify it with your purest thoughts and holiest sacrifices until it becomes yours and, through you, becomes the world's.

LESSON QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the kingdom of God? In what sense is there a development of this kingdom?
2. What subtopics are discussed under the subject "The Sovereignty of God"?
3. What was the early Hebrew conception of the source of God's authority? What changes occurred in this idea of Jehovah's right to rule?
4. What changes took place in Israel's thought of Jehovah's character? In what ways was the range of Jehovah's rule expanded?
5. Give the evidence that Israel believed in the existence of other gods than Jehovah? Were the Hebrews at any time polytheists? What was the chief contributing element in the development of monotheism?
6. Why did the early Hebrews believe that Jehovah did not rule in Sheol?
7. What element in the prophetic teaching prepared the way for the belief that Jehovah's realm embraced the whole of creation? What relation does the resurrection sustain to Jehovah's universal reign?
8. What changes took place in the ideas of the nature of God's rule?
9. What was the primitive Semitic idea of the purpose of the creation? How was this purpose expressed by the prophets?
10. What is the history in Jewish thinking of God's demands from men?
11. Discuss the value and place of worship in religion.
12. What changes occurred in Israel's conception of sin? What conceptions of the forgiveness of sin were developed in Israel?
13. Estimate the contribution of the prophets in the development of the kingdom of God.
14. What convincing reasons may be offered for the presence of God in human affairs?

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